FEVER PITCH

(aka BOSTON ROMANCE)

by

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Based on the novel "Fever Pitch" by Nick Hornby
and the 1997 film "Fever Pitch", screenplay by Nick Hornby

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FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: "THE FIRST TIME"

INT. APARTMENT - BOSTON - DAY - 1977

A small apartment. A BOY'S BEDROOM.

OPEN ON:

A TV. "The Smurfs" is on.

LANA (O.C.)
Ben, I have to go now.

REVEAL BEN, 7 or 8 years old, watching TV. He's lying on his bed. The bed is made and he's above the covers and dressed. He's not really enjoying "The Smurfs." He's just staring at it, emptily.

BEN
(lips barely moving)
'Bye.

REVEAL: LANA, Ben's mother. She's wearing a serving costume -- the kind waitresses wear at catered affairs. She's worried about Ben. He seems so lifeless.

LANA
Mrs. Warren is going to keep an eye on you.

REVEAL: MRS. WARREN. She has one dead eye.

MRS. WARREN
Hello, Ben.

LANA
She'll make you a tuna sandwich with not too much mayonnaise, she knows.

MRS. WARREN
I'm just going to get my knitting. I'll be right back.

Mrs. Warren turns towards her bad eye, HITS A STANDING LAMP, recovers and exits. Ben continues to stare listlessly at the TV.

LANA
Honey, why don't you come with me? You can help me. You'll put the rolls in the baskets like last time.

CONTINUED:

He makes a listless negative noise.

Pause.

LANA (CONT'D)
(more forcefully)
Ben, I don't want you lying here watching TV all day again.

Ben gets up, turns off the TV and flops back on to the bed. Now he's really doing nothing. Lana is upset. He's breaking her heart. She doesn't know what to do. She gives up and exits. A moment later, she barrels back in.

LANA (CONT'D)
No.

She grabs his arm with one hand and PICKS UP his SHOES with the other.

LANA (CONT'D)
Come on.

BEN
Where are we going?

LANA
It doesn't concern you.

INT. CARL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Lana's brother CARL (40) is with Lana and Ben. Carl is not delighted.

LANA
(to Ben)
You and Uncle Carl are gonna have fun.

Ben doesn't seem to think so. Carl checks his watch. Lana KISSES Ben.

LANA (CONT'D)
(to Carl)
I'll be home before you get back.

CARL
I'm not gonna have to change him or anything, right?

LANA
Carl. Look at him. He's seven.

INT. CARL'S CAR

Ben is not comfortable with Carl. Carl is not kid-friendly.

CARL
You ever been to a game?

BEN
Uh-uh.

Pause.

CARL
You're a real little chatterbox, aren't you?

BEN
Uh-uh.

CARL
Good.

They turn a corner and Fenway Park suddenly seems to rise up out of the neighborhood like a battleship. Ben's EYES WIDEN a little.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Full of life. CROWDS, MERCHANTS. Ben is soaking this all in.

Carl leads him to a turnstile and his tickets are torn and they enter.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - CONCOURSE

Carl and Ben, walk through loud, milling crowds and souvenir and food stands. Carl leads Ben up through a tunnel into the stands.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - BOX SEATS

Carl and Ben emerge into the Grandstand. Batting practice is taking place. MUSIC is playing. CROWDS are filing in.

Ben is AWESTRUCK by the size, color, and grandeur of the *Park. He takes in everything. Carl leads him to their* seats. They're very good seats. There's a regular there name Al. Al is CHEERFUL.

CONTINUED:

AL
(to Carl)
What's this?

CARL
(still not thrilled)
My sister's kid. He's all fucked up. His parents just got divorced and they moved back here and he hasn't got any friends.

AL
He does now.

He hands Ben a SPONGE. The sponge has writing on it and an obnoxious caricature of Al.

AL (CONT'D)
Al Waterman. I manufacture sponges.

BEN
Thank you.

Ben stares at the Left Field Wall WIDE-EYED.

AL
That's the Green Monster, kid.

BEN
Monster?

AL
Yep. Everything about the Red Sox starts with that Wall.

Ben is interested.

AL (CONT'D)
See, it's close. So sometimes it turns an ordinary fly ball into a home run. But it's high. So sometimes it turns a home run into a single. The Wall giveth and the Wall --

Ben is FASCINATED.

CARL
(interrupting)
Don't load his head with too much information. We don't know how bright he is.

CONTINUED: (2)

LATER

Ben is eating a hot dog. Something bad happens. Everyone "Boos." Ben is intrigued. A moment later, everyone around Ben JUMPS UP. It's a foul ball in their section.

Uncle Carl fights for the foul ball. And he really goes for it. He gets it. Ben finds this exciting.

BEN
You're bleeding!

CARL
No, that's her blood.

LATER

MEN'S ROOM -- Carl and Ben are at a trough, urinating. Ben glances towards Carl's fly. (Which we can't see.)

CARL (CONT'D)
Impressed, hah?...
(zips up)
You'll get there.

IN THE STANDS

Ben looks at the *scoreboard.*

BEN
Uncle Carl, what does 302 mean?

CARL
That's his batting average.

BEN
What does that mean?

Carl is ANNOYED. Al steps in.

AL
You good at math?

BEN
(modestly)
I do okay.

AL
Do you know what fifty per cent means?

BEN
Half.

CONTINUED: (3)

AL
(to Carl)
Kid's smarter than you.
(to Ben)
302 means about thirty per cent. It means about thirty per cent of the time he gets a hit. Thirty per cent is good.

CARL
(impatiently)
Got it now?

Ben nods.

LATER

BEN
Uncle Carl...

CARL
What now?

BEN
If this guy is only hitting
(reads the scoreboard)
215, that means he's only getting hits... Twenty-one per cent of the time. That's one out of five. So why is he batting lead-off?

CARL
(annoyed)
Because...
(thinks, then yells angrily at the field)
Hey, Zimmer, you idiot! What are you batting this bum lead-off for?!

He looks at Ben with new respect.

INT. CONCOURSE

The Crowd is exiting. Carl, on a sudden whim, stops at a souvenir stand.

CARL
(to the vendor)
Give me that book, the big one.

INT. CAR

Ben has the book in his lap, reading it. It's a big, colorful, illustrated history of the Red sox. He turns to a page featuring Ted Williams and the number "406."

Carl glances over enjoying the book vicariously.

INT. LANA'S APARTMENT

Carl is saying good-bye to Lana. Ben is in a chair holding the Red Sox Book which he is still reading.

LANA
(to Carl)
Thanks, Carl. Was he okay?

CARL
(shrugs)
Yeah. Um... If he wants to go again Saturday, give me a call.

He exits. Lana is surprised. Ben is surprised. After a moment's thought, Ben suddenly runs to the window. He sees Carl emerge downstairs from the building.

BEN
(excitedly)
I do want to go! I want to!

Lana is SHOCKED. Ben is full of excitement and energy. She's thrilled to see him like this.

Carl TOSSES the baseball he caught up to Ben who catches it.

CLOSE-UP of the baseball in Ben's hands.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: "THE HORROR"

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - MASSACHUSETTS - NIGHT - 1986

CLOSE-UP of a PAIR OF HANDS, anxiously passing a baseball hand-to-hand.

WE HEAR:

TROY (V.O.)
Three outs to go! This is it!!

REVEAL:

CONTINUED:

The hands belong to Ben, now 18.

We're in the Living Room of a Frat House. It's packed with COLLEGE STUDENTS, GUYS and GIRLS, but more guys, all watching the 10th inning of Game 6 of the 1986 World Series.

Beer is flowing. It's wild. They've all been watching this game and drinking for hours. The mood is very, very festive and excited.

ON TV: WALLY BACKMAN OF THE METS FLIES OUT TO LEFT FIELD

IN THE ROOM: Bedlam, delirium. SHOUTS of "Two more. Two outs to go. Come on Calvin. Go Sox. This is it, they're gonna do it," etc.

The guys are on their feet, slapping each other on the back, constantly screaming at the TV. Nobody is as happy as Ben who actually seems to be glowing. No one has ever been happier than he is right now. A BUDDY tousles Ben's hair.

TROY (CONT'D)
They're gonna do it, Ben! First time since 1918!

TROY AND BEN HIGH-FIVE

Ben is with a pretty girl (ANNA) who is a little tipsy. She's draped all over him. Also, she's nibbling on him. She's starting the celebration early. She's drunk and playful.

BEN
Nobody touch that phone. The second this is over, I'm calling my Uncle Carl.

Ben's concentration is more on the TV than on Anna.

ANNA
(to Ben)
After you make your call... I know a great way we can celebrate.

She WHISPERS something in his ear. Ben is a little startled by what she's said.

BEN
Oo. Nice idea.

She WINKS and LICKS HIS EARLOBE. He's turned on, but still focused mainly on the TV.

CONTINUED: (2)

ON TV

KEITH HERNANDEZ FLIES OUT TO CENTER FIELD

IN THE ROOM

A huge cheer, "One out to go!!"

BEN (CONT'D)
Red Sox Nation!!!

The others SCREAM.

Anna is UNBUTTONING Ben's shirt and playing with his chest. She starts to KISS him. He responds but his eyes stay on the TV. He angles her so that she doesn't block his view.

Everyone is up, poised to celebrate the final out.

ON TV

GARY CARTER GETS A HIT

IN THE ROOM

GROANS, but no one's too upset yet.

Ben, reacting to the hit, winces slightly. Anna, though, has already taken the Red Sox win as a given. Her hand is fiddling with Ben's belt.

ON TV

KEVIN MITCHELL GETS A HIT

IN THE ROOM

Now some anxiety starts to set in. Shouts of "Oh shit, come on, who needed this, etc."

Ben is getting NERVOUS. He's starting to restrain Anna.

BEN (CONT'D)
Wait a minute, just...

ON TV

RAY KNIGHT GETS A HIT

IN THE ROOM

CONTINUED: (3)

SCREAMS of dismay. Cans are thrown. The mood is changing rapidly.

Ben is now starting to get very tense. This game may be slipping away. Anna's attentions, now, are just annoying him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Anna... just... cut it out. Just...

She's oblivious. She keeps nibbling on him. Finally:

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey -- please -- control yourself!

She's STUNNED. She lets go of him. He ignores her. She's hurt. And angry.

ON TV

MOOKIE WILSON IS UP. There's a wild pitch. Kevin Mitchell scores. VIN SCULLY (the TV announcer) informs the viewers that the game is now tied.

IN THE ROOM

SHOCK, SILENCE, STRAIN, HORROR

Anna exits. Ben doesn't care.

BEN (CONT'D)
Please, God, this can't be happening.

ON TV

Mookie's infamous ground ball rolling towards and then through the legs of BILL BUCKNER.

VIN SCULLY (V.O.)
"And it gets through Buckner. Here comes Knight... and the Mets win it!!!"

IN THE ROOM

SCREAMS as if a murder has been witnessed. People collapse. Girls cry. Men weep.

Ben, SCREAMING grabs the TV and shakes it, as if to bring it to its senses.

BEN
Noooo!!

EXT. FRAT HOUSE

Anna is approaching her car. She HEARS a CRASH, looks up, and Ben's TV comes sailing through the window and lands not far from her.

ANNA
(yells)
You're sick, Ben! You're a sick sick sick man! Sick!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FENWAY PARK - NOVEMBER 2002

TITLE CARD: "THE OFF-SEASON. 136 DAYS TO OPENING DAY"

PAN DOWN into Boston traffic.

A seven-year-old inexpensive car is driving by.

INT. CAR

The Driver is BEN, sixteen years later. Ben in his thirties, has turned out to be attractive in a very unself-conscious way. *He seems at ease with himself. A lot more relaxed than* when we last saw him.

He's driving four 10th graders of various ethnicities. A boy, RYAN in front, two girls (TAMMY and AUDREY) and a boy (CASEY) in the back. Both girls are ON CELL PHONES. Casey is wearing headphones, but his music is so loud we can still hear it. Ryan is Asian and is energetically critiquing Ben's driving.

RYAN
You could've gotten over right there! You've gotta be aggressive, man, you're driving like my grandmother.

BEN
Don't be racist.

Ben checks his rear-view mirror.

BEN (CONT'D)
Audrey, Tammy... Are you two talking to each other?

CONTINUED:

TAMMY
We're conferencing Amanda, she's home sick.

AUDREY
Some kind of urinary thing.

BEN
(dryly)
Yeah, well keep me updated.

Tammy nudges Casey. He removes one earphone.

TAMMY
(to Casey)
Amanda likes that song, can you turn it up?

He nods, puts the earphones back in his ears and increases the volume. All the kids start grooving. Ben glances at Casey in disbelief.

INT. UPSCALE OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY

Elevator doors OPEN. Ben and the kids get out. We pick up a conversation in the middle as they all head for a particular destination.

RYAN
So what does this company make?

BEN
Make? This is the new economy. Nobody makes anything anymore. Everything is made by one overworked couple in Malaysia.

The kids CHUCKLE. They're smart kids. They appreciate Ben's take on things.

They enter an office.

INT. OFFICE -CONTINUOUS

Ben speaks to a RECEPTIONIST.

BEN
Hi. I'm Ben Wrightman from North Side High School. I've made an appointment with a Miss Lindsey Meeks to meet four of our school's most gifted math students.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
They couldn't make it so I brought these four idiots.

They kids all give him a SARCASTIC LAUGH.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

LINDSEY MEEKS is about 30 years old. She's good-looking and keeps herself very fit.

Lindsey has a nice office -- not overly nice, she doesn't run the place. She's ON the computer. Her DOOR OPENS and her assistant, CARRIE enters carrying a salad in a clear, plastic container.

CARRIE
I asked them for no ham, double-turkey and I just noticed they gave me double-ham.

Lindsey doesn't stop working. She's very busy and distracted.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
You want me to go back?

LINDSEY
(torn)
Hm? Uh... No, uh... just toss some of it into my mouth.

CARRIE
And that teacher's here with those kids.

LINDSEY
What?

CARRIE
Remember? You spoke on the phone to a --

Lindsey remembers and is UNHAPPY about it. She's too busy.

LINDSEY
Oh! Oh! That's today?

CARRIE
They're here.

LINDSEY
Ohh... No. No. Look... Tell them you're me. Take them around and --

CONTINUED:

Ben and the KIDS enter. Lindsey, not missing a beat, turns on the charm.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Hi. Come on in.

BEN
Ben Wrightman. We spoke on the phone.

LINDSEY
Yes. Yes. I've been waiting for you. Hi. Lindsey Meeks.

Carrie exits.

They shake hands. There's a quick imperceptible moment of checking each other out. They've both come upon someone more attractive than they suspected.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(to the kids)
Can I get anyone anything?

CASEY
Vodka martini?

She looks at Ben.

BEN
(calmly)
I'll have the same.

She's taken aback for a second, then laughs. Ben lightly cuffs Casey on the back of his head.

BEN (CONT'D)
I asked you to behave.

LINDSEY
(amused)
Are you allowed to hit them?

BEN
No, it was a special request from his parents. They've beaten themselves into exhaustion.
(to business)
Well, as I told you on the phone, I teach honors geometry, 10th grade, and every year I pick out a few
(loudly, at the kids)
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN (CONT'D)
promising math students and take them to meet somebody who pursued mathematics as an educational discipline and has made practical use of that education.

LINDSEY
(to the kids)
Okay. Well, first of all, in high school I took calculus and advanced calculus. I went to Duke University and majored in Management Science and Engineering with a specialty in Financial and Decision Analysis. Now what that means is, I studied how math concepts are used in a business framework. We --

The kids look dull -- glazed over.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(to Ben)
I think I've killed them.

BEN
Could we see your car?

LINDSEY
(confused)
What?

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE

The kids are staring wide-eyed at a sports car. A convertible. Two of the kids are sitting in it.

RYAN
Sweet ride.

Ben and Lindsey speak quietly to each other.

LINDSEY
What does this have to do --?

BEN
You know how in order to get the animals in the zoo to look at you, you have to poke on the glass?
These kids are very savvy. They're competitive - when motivated. They want to see with their own eyes the other end of the rainbow. I can't convince them to pursue mathematics if they think it means winding up driving
(points to himself)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
an eight-year-old Honda. Now I think they're ready to listen to you.

INT. OFFICE AREA

Lindsey is at a computer, the kids gathered around. Lindsey is genuinely enthusiastic about her work and what she's saying.

LINDSEY
My name is Lindsey and I am a math geek. And this is my geekdom. Ryan and Myerson are a consulting firm. Other businesses hire us to analyze, mathematically, the probable result of any decision they're contemplating. Expansions, contractions, re-locations you name it.
(confidentially)
Now let me ask you something. Are any of you in the habit of looking at numbers -- addresses, license plates, phone numbers -- and adding them up and re-arranging them in your head to make more interesting patterns?

CASEY
(shocked)
Oh my God. My secret shame.

They all raise their hands, surprised that she's guessed their secret.

LINDSEY
Well then step into the light, my friends. This is the Church of Numbers and every day is Sunday.

TAMMY
Tell it sister!

They LAUGH.

Ben smiles. He finds her delightful.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Ben and the kids are heading for the elevator.

CASEY
(turned on)
Major hottie.

CONTINUED:

RYAN
Major?
(salutes)
Colonel hottie!

Casey returns Ryan's salute.

AUDREY
She went optic for you, Mr. Wrightman.

BEN
Optic?

AUDREY
Yeah, I saw her glance to the pants.

CASEY
No way.

BEN
What do you mean?

AUDREY
I mean she --

BEN
(to Casey)
No. What did you mean.

CASEY
Nothing, you know, just... You saw her.

BEN
So wait a minute. You're saying she's out of my league?

RYAN
She's bringing some serious heat, man. I don't know if you got the bat speed.

BEN
I got bat speed. I got plenty of bat speed. I can hit her best cheese.
(thinks)
In fact, you guys wait in the car.

They all do the suggestive "whoooo." Ben leaves them.

INT. LADIES' ROOM - SAME

Carrie is sitting on a sink writing in a steno pad. WE HEAR from inside a Closed Stall Door:

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY (O.C.)
(fast, sharp, and routine)
"... Please contact me, personally, if any part of the enclosed report is unclear, I look forward to our future *association, blah-blah-blah,"* what else?

CARRIE
That's it for now.

FLUSH

INT. HALL

Lindsey is wearing a Telephone Headset as she charges down *the hall towards her office. Carrie hurrying to keep up.*

LINDSEY
(into mouthpiece)
Ezra, boy, where's my data?

She passes the Open Door of a small office where a YOUNG MAN is ON the PHONE, actually talking to Lindsey.

EZRA
(into phone)
I put it on your desk.

LINDSEY
(into mouthpiece)
Good lad. Keep me current.

She DISCONNECTS.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(to Carrie)
Those kids were cute.

CARRIE
Which kids?

LINDSEY
The ones, the ones that were here.

CARRIE
Oh.

They reach Carrie's work station. Carrie sits down and checks her computer.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
Maybe I should be a teacher. Or a college professor. I could dress how I want, it's not so competitive...

CARRIE
(excited)
Oh my God. Jack is leaving.

LINDSEY
What?!

CARRIE
It's on the Office E-Mail. He's leaving the company next summer.

LINDSEY
Wow!! That's -- so what do you think? Are they going to bring someone in from outside?

CARRIE
(how would I know?)
I'm just --

LINDSEY
I wonder if they're going to promote from within.

CARRIE
(drily)
I thought you were becoming a teacher...

LINDSEY
(dismissively)
Low blood-sugar, I didn't eat.

Suddenly SHE SEES Ben sitting in a chair, browsing through a magazine. She's SURPRISED.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Hi.

BEN
Hi. I didn't want to interrupt. It sounded like you were in the middle of a major corporate hoo-ha.

LINDSEY
Yeah, well, there's suddenly a big opening, so it could get mildly murderous around here.

CONTINUED: (2)

They both CHUCKLE.

Pause.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
So, uh... I don't know how to put this but...

BEN
... why am I here?

LINDSEY
(cheerfully)
There you go.

He hesitates a second and decides not to try his luck yet.

BEN
I just wanted you to know that you really got through to those kids, today. They were really juiced.

LINDSEY
(flattered)
Oh. Well, that's great... yeah...

BEN
Yeah...

They're both nodding. There's nothing left to say.

LINDSEY
(not rudely)
Is the conversation over?

BEN
You mean because neither of us is speaking?

LINDSEY
Uh-huh.

BEN
Well, also I came back to ask you if I could... call you some time... socially?

LINDSEY
(surprised)
Oh?

INT. ROLLER HOCKEY RINK - NIGHT

A PLAYER'S FACE is flattened against the plexiglass. Ben is in a roller hockey game. Two of his closest friends, TROY and KEVIN, are on Ben's team. (Troy is Ben's old college friend.)

Ben is playing aggressively -- violently. A WHISTLE BLOWS. There's a brief pause for a face-off. Ben is panting a little and he's a little ANGRY.

BEN
I know why she wouldn't go out with me... because I'm not in her class.

TROY
She said that?

MORE ACTION, then a scrum against the boards.

BEN
No, but I saw it in her face. "Like I'm really gonna date a schoolteacher."

Ben violently checks a player to the ground.

KEVIN
Ben, that's one of our guys.

INT. SPIN CLASS - NIGHT

Lindsey and three of her friends are getting ready for their workout. All four are about the same age. They set out towels, water-bottles, one of them disinfects the bicycle seat --

SARAH
So what was his problem? Not smart? Not attractive?

LINDSEY
No, no, he was...
(gives up)
Oh, it's hopeless.

MOLLY
(has heard this lament before)
Okay, here we go.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
No, really. I'm going to be twenty-ten next year. The dating market is, shall we say, brutish. But instead of my becoming more open and available, I'm becoming less open. It's like... they keep taking items off the menu and I'm developing allergies.

INSTRUCTOR (FEMALE)
Talking isn't burning calories.

The workout begins.

INT. SPIN CLASS - LATER

They're in mid-workout.

Lindsey is a champ. She's pedaling at a ferocious rate. Sarah SWEATS like Niagara Falls. Towels are laid on the floor around her bike to catch the drip. Lindsey checks out everyone else and sees ONE LADY going as fast as she is so Lindsey speeds up.

INSTRUCTOR
All right, ease it back.

They ease back a little, but are still working hard. They pant heavily as they talk.

ROBIN
(to Lindsey)
Well, what are you looking for?

LINDSEY
I don't know --

ROBIN
There's the problem.

LINDSEY
Give me a second!
(pause)
I'd like to feel... relaxed with someone. Comfortable. At ease. Even sex, I'd like it not to be a... performance.

SARAH
Well, then maybe you should date a different kind of guy.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
Why? What do you mean?

SARAH
All the guys you date are sharp, competitive, successful. You're dating...

LINDSEY
... Me.

MOLLY
Ding-ding-ding.

SARAH
So what was wrong with the schoolteacher?

LINDSEY
(thinks)
Well...

ROBIN
(explaining)
He's a schoolteacher. Which means he has a small...
(holds her thumb and index finger three inches apart)
income.

Lindsey realizes she's been pegged.

INSTRUCTOR
All right. Speed it up!

SARAH
(mutters)
Die you Nazi spin-bitch.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Inside the park. It's a dark, wet, raw, November New England afternoon. The tarp is on the infield, and the field is a lake. It's deserted. Eerie.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Same weather.

It's the end of the school day. KIDS are getting out, running to keep dry.

INT. SCHOOL

Kids emptying lockers. Ben is heading for the School Office. TWO BOYS are throwing a football. Ben steps in and intercepts it.

BEN
(to the farther away kid)
Go long.

The kid does. Ben throws. Too high. It hits a FEMALE TEACHER who was facing the other way on the back of the head. The teacher turns ANGRILY. Ben immediately grabs the kid closer to him.

BEN (CONT'D)
(as if angry)
You're coming with me.

He pulls the kid along and into the office.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BEN
(to the kid)
Thanks.

He sends him back out.

TEACHERS and OFFICE PERSONNEL of both genders are milling about. There is a series of cubbyholes for messages, each with a teacher's name on it. Ben looks for messages.

ZACH, another teacher, approaches.

ZACH
Hey, Ben, you going to watch the Celtics later?

BEN
(not enthused)
I don't know.

ZACH
There are other sports besides baseball.

JERRY (ANOTHER TEACHER)
Baseball is too slow. Football is the National Pastime now.

CONTINUED:

BEN
You know, Jerry, I'd stand here and discuss it with you, but it's only going to lead to my being led away in handcuffs.

VERN (GYM TEACHER)
Hey, speaking of baseball, you want to co-coach the team with me this year?

BEN
(he doesn't)
Why? You're doing a good job, you know, you can't just go by wins and losses.

VERN
Yeah, but you're good at it, the boys like you. You --

BEN
It's good the way it is. You coach and I'll help out when... I can. You know, that way, when I can't show up, it's nobody's--

He finds a message that really surprises him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Rita, when did this come in?

He shows it to her.

RITA
A tip might be where it says "Time Called, two-thirty."

BEN
I know, but today? It's not left over from last week?

RITA
No, you're thinking of the macaroni.

INT. INDOOR ROCK-CLIMBING FACILITY - DAY

Molly and Robin are climbing the wall. Lindsey and Sarah are on the ground holding the ropes.

SARAH
What about his... "small income."

She makes the "small" gesture.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
What about I haven't really liked anyone in four years? *Besides, he's not playing* a flute with a hat full of dollar bills in front of him. He's a teacher. Anyway, it's just a date, we're not getting married.

SARAH
(doubtfully)
I guess...

LINDSEY
(turnabout)
You don't think it'll work? Should I get out of it? Because I can call him right now and get out of it.

On "right now", she lets go of the rope.

OFF-CAMERA we hear a SCREAM then a thump.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Sorry, Robin.

INT. CONDO HALLWAY - EVENING

We're on an apartment front door. WE HEAR, horrible MOANING from inside.

REVEAL, Ben, dressed nicely and carrying flowers. He's about to knock but he's listening to these noises from inside.

LINDSEY (O.C.)
Ohhhh... ohhhhhh... oh, just kill me, please... just take a hammer and kill me...

Ben is undecided about what to do. He considers leaving. There's a moment of silence. He RINGS the BELL.

LINDSEY (CONT'D; O.C.) (CONT'D)
Ohhh, shit!!!...
(in pain)
Who is it?!!

BEN
It's me, Ben. Your date.

LINDSEY (O.C.)
Oh God, no!

CONTINUED:

There's a pause, then the door opens. Lindsey appears. She's dressed, but looks like hell. She's very ill and doubled over. Her hair and face are damp and sweaty. She's trembling. Her mouth is half-open and her tongue is over her bottom teeth. She's panting.

BEN
(reacting)
Yow!

LINDSEY
(in pain)
I'm sick. Go home... I'll call you tomorrow.

BEN
(concerned)
What's wrong? What --?

LINDSEY
I ate at this new place. I think I got --

She MOANS in pain and scurries to the bathroom.

WE FOLLOW Lindsey.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She rushes in and throws up just short of the toilet. She starts to sob -- a combination of pain and disgust.

LINDSEY
Mommy...

She moans some more. Her big DOG comes in and nuzzles her.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Ernie, go way...

WE HEAR SLURPING

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(disgusted)
Ernie, don't eat that.

She begins to retch again. She's panting heavily between retches. She HEARS:

BEN (O.C.)
So we're off?

CONTINUED:

She starts to LAUGH which causes her to throw up again. She hears WATER RUNNING, then Ben stoops down beside her and wipes her face with a damp rag. He gently wipes the corners of her mouth, then wets another rag and wipes her neck.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Ben supports her as she walks wobbly-legged to her bed. She's still in bad shape, but the screaming has stopped. He sits her down on the bed. She's a rag doll. There are stains on her dress.

BEN
You have pajamas, nightgown...?

She points to a dresser.

LINDSEY
(weakly)
Top drawer.

He RUMMAGES THROUGH her drawer.

BEN
Ooh, I like these.

He gets her a clean nightgown. He brings it to her. She just GROANS.

BEN (CONT'D)
Here...

He stands her up and lets her lean on him.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm not going to look.

He pulls her dress off over her head.

BEN (CONT'D)
I looked.

He puts the NIGHTGOWN over her head and puts her in bed. He covers her.

WE STAY with Lindsey.

Ben goes out of the bedroom leaving the door ajar. She HEARS the refrigerator door open and close. Then through the half-opened door, she sees Ben, in the living room pick up her purse and rummage through it. She murmurs weak objection which he can't hear.

CONTINUED:

She sees him take her keys and leave the apartment. She's too weak to do anything about it. Her eyes close.

DISSOLVE TO:

Lindsey, eyes still closed. She HEARS her *FRONT DOOR* open. Her eyes open. She catches a glimpse of Ben carrying a brown paper grocery bag. She hears a cupboard door open and close. Then, a moment later, Ben enters the bedroom. He's carrying a glass of Gatorade with a straw in it. He puts it on the night table.

BEN (CONT'D)
Drink this when you feel like you can.

She FALLS ASLEEP.

DISSOLVE TO:

She wakes up and sees:

Ben scrubbing the bathroom floor. Ernie is getting in his way.

BEN (CONT'D)
Come on, get out of here.

Her EYES SHUT.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN;

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

WE HEAR the SHOWER RUNNING. It stops. Lindsey pulls her robe off the shower door and exits putting it on. Her hair is wet. She grabs a towel and starts drying her hair. She goes through the bedroom and into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She enters.

SHE SEES:

Ben ASLEEP, sitting up on her couch. Ernie, is resting in his lap. Ernie sees Lindsey and jumps off. This wakes up Ben, who takes a moment to orient himself. Then:

BEN
Hi.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSEY
Hi.

BEN
Are you all right?

LINDSEY
I'm not about to enter a pie-eating contest... Did you clean my bathroom or did I dream that?

BEN
Me? No, the vomit elves came in. Horrible looking creatures...

LINDSEY
(gratefully)
Well, you really went above and beyond. Thank you.

BEN
Oh, it wasn't even that bad. It was actually very lady-like, hardly any chunkage.

She LAUGHS. He gets up to leave.

BEN (CONT'D)
So, not a bad first date.

He PICKS UP a Blockbuster Video bag.

LINDSEY
What's that?

BEN
Oh, I rented some movies in case you woke up. Not in <u>case</u> -- I <u>knew</u> you'd wake up. I meant, in case you woke up in the middle of the night.

LINDSEY
Anything good?

BEN
Uh... mostly animated pornography from Japan.

She LAUGHS.

BEN (CONT'D)
And a few things I like.

LINDSEY
Like what?

BEN
Well, things I watch when I'm sick.

LINDSEY
With me it's "Young Frankenstein."

He looks STUNNED.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
What?

He takes a copy of "Young Frankenstein" out of the bag.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
... spooky.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT - A FEW DAYS LATER

Ben and Lindsey are at a table.

Food is in front of them. Lindsey is talking ON HER PHONE. Ben is eating, enjoying his meal, and not, apparently, terribly irritated by the fact that Lindsey is on the phone.

LINDSEY
(into phone)
No, I'm not giving her my assistant... Eric, she makes the same money I do, so why is she so far behind... Because I've trained Carrie, I even like her -- look does this have to be settled tonight? ... I'm with a person... Yes... All right, fine, we'll talk tomorrow.
(hangs up)
I'm really, really, really sorry.

BEN
So am I. I ate all the shrimp and left you the cashews.

She LAUGHS a little.

LINDSEY
I once went out with a guy, who got so mad he grabbed my phone and threw it in a fish tank.

BEN
I wouldn't do that.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
How come?

BEN
Well... I guess because I'm relatively comfortable with the size of my penis...
(shrugs)

She laughs and SPILLS RICE.

LINDSEY
Does anything stress you out?

BEN
Um...

LINDSEY
Because frankly most of the guys I meet are very highly... I date poodles, basically.

He laughs.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
And really, I'm pretty relaxed --

Her PHONE RINGS. She snaps.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Kee-rist!

BEN
(calmly)
Hey...

He takes her phone and answers it.

BEN (CONT'D)
Hello... No she's not, may I take a message?... I'm Ben, I'm her houseboy-slash-sex slave... Okay.
(hangs up)
Call your mother.

EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER

They walk outside. They're having fun.

LINDSEY
You don't own a cellphone, an answering machine, a beeper, a pager, nothing?

CONTINUED:

BEN
Nope.

LINDSEY
What if there's a sudden crisis, your... God forbid your father has a heart attack?

BEN
He died two years ago.

LINDSEY
(sympathetic)
Oh...

BEN
I just found out Friday.

She cracks up.

LINDSEY
You're very funny Ben...

BEN
You can't remember my last --

LINDSEY
(remembers)
Wrightman!
(apologetically)
I just blanked for --

BEN
I know why you forgot.

LINDSEY
Why?

BEN
Because I'll bet whenever you mention me to your friends you call me Ben the Schoolteacher, right?

LINDSEY
(caught)
Well... what do you call me to your friends?

Ben stops. He turns to face her. His fingers touch the tip of her chin. It's romantic.

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN
I call you... Lindsey the Vomit Girl.

LINDSEY
That's horrible.

BEN
Hey... anything I said about *you* would be an understatement.

She stares at him. This is The Guy. They walk on. She reaches for his hand and holds it.

INT. MOLLY AND STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - A FEW WEEKS LATER

It's a party. Twenty or so people are present, but we OPEN ON SIX PEOPLE, standing in a row all facing us. They are Sarah and her boyfriend, IAN, Molly and STEVE, and Robin and her husband, CHRIS. They're all smiling.

ALL SIX
Hi.

REVEAL Ben and Lindsey.

Hands are shaken. Everyone says "Hi," "How you doing" etc.

BEN
(cheerfully)
Okay, it's time to play "Where did *Lindsey dig this guy up?*"

They all LAUGH.

MOLLY
No, no, it's not like that.

STEVE
(hands Ben an empty glass)
Here. This is for the urine sample.

INT. PARTY - LATER

Ben and Chris.

CHRIS
(in awe)
Behind the Red Sox dugout?! Two season *seats?!*

Ben nods.

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Do you find my wife attractive? 'Cause we can work something out.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

All four ladies enter. They LOCK the door. They're excited.

MOLLY
Well you did it. He's nothing like the guys you usually date.

LINDSEY
(very pleased)
I know.
(then, suddenly paranoid)
What do you mean?

SARAH
No, she meant it nice.

MOLLY
And he's really cute.

SARAH
And funny and smart.

LINDSEY
Oh good. Because if you didn't like him, I was going to have to get three new friends.

MOLLY
No, I really think you've really got something there.

SARAH
Me too.

MOLLY
Definitely.

ROBIN
Something is wrong.

LINDSEY
(begging for mercy)
Robin...

ROBIN
I love him. He's a doll. Only he's 33.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
So?

ROBIN
So this doesn't happen. Where has he been? Why is he still on the market?

SARAH
Well... Maybe he never met the right person.

ROBIN
By this time he should be with the wrong person. How has he not been tranquilized and tagged?

INT. PARTY - LATER

Just the four guys.

STEVE
(reverently)
So you were at the All-Star Game? When they wheeled out Ted Williams?

BEN
I was there.

STEVE
Oh man...

BEN
Old men. Crying. Tears. Big tough old guys. I started to go. I've got the program, I'll show it to you.

CHRIS
If Lindsey breaks up with you, I'll kill her.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

SARAH
(re: Robin)
She's right.

ROBIN
Go through his apartment. Drawers, closets, sofa cushions. Get on to his computer.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
(confused)
What am I looking for?

ROBIN
Anything that explains why he's still single.

SARAH
Like what?

ROBIN
A human head in the freezer. Yodeling garb. Naked pictures of his parents. You never know!

SARAH
My company can run a credit check on him.

MOLLY
He could be a deadbeat dad.

LINDSEY
This is an insane asylum.

ROBIN
(to Molly)
Remember that guy Maureen Durst went out with?

MOLLY
Terry what's-his-name.

ROBIN
We thought he was great.

LINDSEY
(scared)
What happened?

ROBIN
She's at his place, he's in the shower, she wants to change the sheets, she's looking in his closets.

LINDSEY
(frightened)
What did she find?

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBIN
Two... large... plastic... bags. Containing all his hair and nail clippings from his whole life.

LINDSEY
(ill)
Uuew.

ROBIN
I'm telling you, there's a reason this guy's single.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE-UP of a Red Sox alarm clock, ringing. Ben turns it off. Ben gets out of bed wearing Red Sox undershorts. He shivers in the cold. As he leaves his bed we see that it is covered with a Red Sox, sheet, a Red Sox blanket, and Red Sox pillowcases. The book Uncle Carl bought him is in a plastic sleeve. And the baseball is in a little plastic dome.

WE FOLLOW him to the bathroom. He picks up a Red Sox towel, enters a bathroom with Red Sox wallpaper and a Red Sox shower curtain. He sits on the toilet and grabs a handful of Yankee toilet paper.

WINTER MONTAGE

FENWAY PARK, hibernating under a thick blanket of snow.

TITLE CARD: "97 DAYS TO OPENING DAY"

MONTAGE:

Ben at his COMPUTER.

ON SCREEN the "Red Sox 2002 Season Schedule" appears. Ben is absorbed.

Ben and Lindsey are walking her dog in a beautiful snowy park.

Gene Wilder and Peter Boyle are singing "Puttin' on the Ritz." PAN TO find ERNIE watching the movie and then we find, Ben and Lindsey sleeping in each other's arms -- post coital.

Lindsey at work at her computer. ON SCREEN:

"Sending you a dozen roses for Valentine's Day." Then twelve identical pictures of Pete Rose appear. Lindsey laughs.

CONTINUED:

TITLE CARD:

"MARCH-THREE WEEKS TO OPENING DAY."

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

A FED-EX TRUCK PULLS UP. Ben runs out in his pajamas.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT -LATER

Ben is there with TROY and LORI -- old pals. They're waiting.

TROY
Come on, screw him, just open it.

The DOOR BURSTS OPEN and another pal, KEVIN, enters in surgical scrubs, including the booties.

KEVIN
Did you wait?

LORI
Yeah.

BEN
(to Kevin)
Is anyone going to die because you're here?

KEVIN
No, no, no. I got one of the other anesthesiologists to cover me.

BEN
We ready?

TROY
Yes! Come on!

They're all like kids on Christmas morning.

Ben PICKS UP the Fed-ex envelope and strips it.

LORI
(sexually)
Oo.

BEN
(to Lori)
Hang on.

CONTINUED:

She nods.

Ben reaches in and removes two packages of BASEBALL TICKETS in neat colorful sheets. Troy reaches for them. Ben SLAPS his hand. Ben touches them. Then he smells them. The others wait. Ben begins to pass them around.

KEVIN
A new season...

TROY
A clean slate...

BEN
This... is the year.

EXT. SKI LODGE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

INT. SKI LODGE - NIGHT

It's a ski lodge -- very atmospheric. Ben and Lindsey are at a table for two, drinking hot alcoholic beverages.

LINDSEY
I think I'm getting drunk? You?

BEN
Don't worry. It makes me a better lover.

LINDSEY
When you're drunk you're a better lover?

BEN
No. When you're drunk I'm a better lover.

They laugh.

LINDSEY
Hey, Ben... What do you like about me?
(suddenly embarrassed)
Oh God. I am drunk! Forget I said --

Ben is fishing out his WALLET.

BEN
No-no. I'm totally prepared.

He pulls a PIECE OF PAPER from his wallet and unfolds it.

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
Why I like Lindsey.

LINDSEY
You have a list?

BEN
M-hm. I love lists. Okay -- I'm going to skip down 'cause the first six are just body parts.

She LAUGHS.

BEN (CONT'D)
I love how every time you fix yourself up in the mirror, just when you're done you go...

He makes a little shrug like "it'll have to do."

BEN (CONT'D)
It's so goddam cute, I want to kill myself. Also --

LINDSEY
(suddenly)
Hey, when's your break?

BEN
Hm?

LINDSEY
Easter, when do you get off?

BEN
Third week in March. That's when you're in Baltimore right?

LINDSEY
Uh-huh. See it's a big thing in my family. Because it's Easter and my birthday and my Dad's birthday and my sister's anniversary, all the same week.

BEN
It's a cluster.

LINDSEY
Yeah. And, uh... how'd you like to come?

BEN
Oh.

LINDSEY
I didn't ask you before because, you know to bring a guy home to the whole family, it just seemed too...
(makes a frightened, shivering noise)
But... maybe it's the rum, or the way you're stroking my leg under the table...

BEN
(not pleased)
Hm...

LINDSEY
Too fast? Too serious?

BEN
No, no, no. Why, you think, I'm --?

LINDSEY
Well, you looked a little --

BEN
No, no, I just... have a previous commitment.

LINDSEY
(surprised)
Oh?... Family?

BEN
No. See, I didn't tell you about this because, I knew you were going away so I figured it didn't matter, but, uh... every year -- during Easter vacation, -- my friends and I...

She nods, waiting.

BEN (CONT'D)
-- we, uh... go down to Florida.

Pause.

LINDSEY
(concerned)
You and your buddies go down to Florida for spring break? At your age?

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN
Hm? No, no, no! We go down for spring training with the Red Sox.

LINDSEY
You train with the Red Sox? You're allowed to do that?

BEN
No we don't actually -- we watch the games.

LINDSEY
Aren't those just practice games?

BEN
... Yes. But there's more to it. We scout the players, we decide who they should keep, who they should get rid of...

LINDSEY
(incredulously)
And the Red Sox ask your opinion?

BEN
... Not so far. But if they ever do...

Ben realizes that the time has come to face the issue.

BEN (CONT'D)
All right. I've been avoiding this. There's something about me that you don't know.

LINDSEY
Is it a bag of hair?

BEN
What?

LINDSEY
Nothing.

BEN
I... am a Red Sox fan.

Pause

LINDSEY
Yeah...

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN
No. I am a big big Red Sox fan.

LINDSEY
I know. I've seen all that stuff in your apartment. The Red Sox glasses, the Red Sox dish towel --

BEN
Yeah, but, when you come over... I don't use the Red Sox sheets. Or pillowcases. Or the Yankee toilet paper. I hide those.

LINDSEY
Why?

BEN
Because I don't want to have to... explain.

LINDSEY
Explain what?!

BEN
Okay. See... when my parents got divorced, my Mom moved me here to Boston near her family. It was the worst time of my life. No friends. No father. I was the "strange" kid from "New Joisey." Then my Uncle Carl started taking me to Fenway Park. And it changed everything. I just... got lost in the game. The ballpark, the color, the people, the noise, the smells... and then he got cancer, and died, and left me his season tickets. And... it's a passion. It's a very, very big part of my life. And it's been a problem with... me and... women.

Lindsey seems confused.

LINDSEY
I'm not getting this. Girls you've dated fight with you about the Red Sox?

BEN
Yes.
(old wounds)
They think it's childish, they think it takes up too much of my time, time I should be spending with them...

CONTINUED: (5)

LINDSEY
Ahh! Ahhh! I know these women!
(horrible whiney voice)
"Pay attention to meeee! Why aren't you talking to meee!"

BEN
(excited)
Yes!

LINDSEY
(truly means it)
Oh, these girls are pathetic. Sarah's like that. And Molly. You know, she almost didn't marry Steve because he likes to sit in his basement and play with electric trains. That's his passion. I said "Molly, for God sakes, leave the guy alone. At least you know where he is. He's not out screwing around. He's down in the basement in overalls yelling "Whoo-whoo, all aboard."

BEN
Right.

LINDSEY
And I'll tell you something else. The guys are no better.
(dumb male voice)
"Between your work and your gym and your friends, when do you have time for meee?"

BEN
Yeah. Or --
(dumb female voice)
"How can you get so worked up over something you're not even doing. You're just watching." Well, you know what. I like being eleven years old once in a while. I like being part of soemthing that's bigger than me. Than I. It's good for your soul to invest in something you can't control. Because that takes unyielding faith and blind devotion.

He stops.

She smiles.

LINDSEY
You're a romantic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BEN
Hm?

LINDSEY
(in love)
You have a lyrical soul. You love under the best and worst of conditions.

BEN
Well...

He thinks about it, then seems pleased.

BEN (CONT'D)
... yeah, I guess so.

She takes his hand.

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey... you think <u>you</u> took a chance inviting me to meet your family? I'm <u>really</u> going to take a chance, now.

He gets down on one knee. She's very surprised. All over the room PEOPLE NOTICE. A buzz goes through the room. Everyone is watching them. The room goes silent.

BEN (CONT'D)
Lindsey...

She's amazed and very unprepared for where this seems to be going.

BEN (CONT'D)
Would you come to Opening Day with me?

LINDSEY
(surprised, but relieved)
... Yes.

Everyone goes "Ahhh" and APPLAUDS.

INT. LINDSEY'S PARENTS' KITCHEN - DAY

MAUREEN (late 50s), Lindsey's mother is putting away groceries. Lindsey enters, speaking to someone O.C. in another room.

LINDSEY
I'll be right back, Dad. I just want to talk to Mom for a second.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(to Maureen, appalled)
What did he do?! I can't look at him!

MAUREEN
(calmly)
I know...

LINDSEY
How could you let him?!

MAUREEN
He's sixty. It's a big psychological milestone. He's struggling with it. Please don't say anything, you'll hurt his feelings. He thinks he looks good.

DOUG, Lindsey's father, enters. He has a pretty full head of hair and it's dyed jet-black. He's even dyed his eyebrows. The dog starts barking at him.

DOUG
(to the dog)
Shut up.
(to Maureen)
What's with him lately? Donna just called. They're on their way.

Lindsey just stares at his hair.

MAUREEN
Good.

He exits. Lindsey and Maureen start to laugh, but it's a laugh mixed with pain.

LINDSEY
He's scaring the dog. How can you stand it?

MAUREEN
He fanned me with a magazine for four years, during menopause, I can put up with this.

They continue putting away groceries. Maureen watches Lindsey.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)
I really like Ben.

LINDSEY
Oh?... You realize you haven't met him or spoken to him.

MAUREEN
I'm well aware of that. I like the effect he has on you. I've never seen you so... At ease.

LINDSEY
Yeah...
(she nods, smiling)
... It's tricky, you know... There's that fine line between being... Overly cautious and being the Dreaded Love Idiot. I mean, how do you...

MAUREEN
I know...

LINDSEY
When do you just... Give it up? I don't mean... (sex)

MAUREEN
I'm well aware you don't mean...

LINDSEY
I mean at what point do you just say to yourself "Okay, I'm counting on this guy being the one, I've got no fall-back plan, I'm just out there?" With you and Dad, where in the courtship did you feel that?

MAUREEN
I would say... A couple of years after you were born.

LINDSEY
What?

MAUREEN
M-hm. One day, I saw him standing outside blowing up that little kiddie pool, for you and Donna... He was blowing and blowing and you and your sister were jumping up and down in your little bathing suits yelling "Faster, Daddy, faster" and I looked at him and he was turning purple and I just thought to myself "I can't imagine living without this man."
(shrugs)
Go back in and talk to him. He misses you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doug is watching "Sports Center" on ESPN. Lindsey enters.

DOUG
Hey, kiddo.

LINDSEY
What are you watching?
(sits)

DOUG
ESPN. That's all I watch. This and the Alligator Guy. Everything else is for women.

She LAUGHS.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Your Mom tells me you've been busy.

LINDSEY
Oof.

DOUG
What's going on?

LINDSEY
Oh, there's this opening at my place, so...

DOUG
A better job?

LINDSEY
(joking)
Well, Dad, I'm not battling for worse.

DOUG
No, no, I know it's more prestige, more money, I mean is it a <u>better job</u>?

LINDSEY
Oh... Well, see, Dad, it's not really about that.

DOUG
Kiddo... it really is.

On TV they introduce a segment from the Red Sox training camp. OVER THE FOLLOWING the Red Sox scouting report plays in the background.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
(changing the subject)
Oh, is this about the Red Sox?

DOUG
(surprised)
Yeah. Are you interested?

LINDSEY
No, no, I just --
(shyly)
I have a friend who's very interested.

DOUG
(a little teasingly)
Oh yes. Is that the schoolteacher?

LINDSEY
(shyly)
Yes.

DOUG
You know, I married a schoolteacher.

LINDSEY
(blushing)
I know.

DOUG
You're glowing, Kiddo.

LINDSEY
(embarrassed, but happy)
Daddy...

DOUG
Come on, already, when do I meet him?

LINDSEY
(defending Ben)
He wanted to come this week. But he had a... Symposium on... Educational...

FROM THE TV, WHILE LINDSEY IS TALKING

REPORTER
Whatever happens, good seasons or bad, through all the frustrations and near-misses, the Red Sox, as always, have the most loyal fans in baseball.

CUT TO:

LINDSEY STOPS BECAUSE:

ON THE TV

WE SEE Ben and his friends, Troy, Lori and Kevin, wearing Red Sox hats and tee-shirts and acting way too young. Troy, in particular is much too exuberant.

TROY
Go Sox!!

REPORTER
How many years in a row have you been down here?

BEN
Seventeen.

TROY
Go Sox!!!

BEN
(to Troy)
He heard you.

REPORTER
Are the Red Sox the most important thing in your life?

BEN
(sets his hand at eye level)
Red Sox...
(lowers his hand to shoulder level)
Sex.
(to waist level)
Breathing. I have season tickets at Fenway. I haven't missed a single game in eleven years.

LORI
He showed up with pueumonia

BEN
Plus, I also go to every game the Red Sox play in New York, plus every summer I follow the team to the West Coast, Texas, Florida, Chicago...

KEVIN
Nomar!!

IN THE ROOM

DOUG
(to Lindsey)
You believe this pinhead?

She's in SHOCK.

ON THE TV

REPORTER
(to Ben)
Do you work?

BEN
Of course I work. I'm a schoolteacher. I mold young minds.

REPORTER
(re: Troy and Kevin)
Can you do anything to help them?

THEME MUSIC ends the segment.

IN THE ROOM

DOUG
So tell me more about *this guy you're* seeing. Sounds like you picked a winner.

She just stares at the set, slack-jawed.

INT. BEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

On his table, all his Red Sox tickets are spread out and organized into many, many little piles. There's also a large Red Sox home schedule, with names written into many of the boxes. In some boxes names have been crossed out and re-written. It looks like a huge organizational undertaking. There's tremendous excitement in the room.

This is a big annual event. There's food and beverages set out. Ben, Troy, Kevin and Lori are there, plus various other assorted FRIENDS and acquaintances. Ben is running the meeting. Tempers are short.

BEN
Come on, come on, we're only up to May, we've been here four hours. Let's try to speed this up. Friday May 26th, Seattle.
(*checking* his chart)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
No wait. I promised that one to Vinnie my mechanic.

TROY
Look, I don't care as long as I get the first Yankee game.

KEVIN
You went to six Yankee games last year you selfish pig-bastard!

TROY
You were there for every great game! Sixteen innings --

KEVIN
Hey! Your mother's hysterectomy? I put her out for free.

Ben speaks through a BULLHORN.

BEN
Attention morons. Awarding of Yankee tickets this year will be determined by bare-knuckle boxing on a barge on the Charles River.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR

BEN (CONT'D)
(through the bullhorn)
Come in.

Lindsey enters, SURPRISED by the crowd and the tumult. Ben is surprised and happy to see her.

BEN (CONT'D)
(through the bullhorn)
Hi, sweetie.
(puts down bullhorn)
I thought you weren't coming home 'til tomorrow.

He JUMPS UP and gives her a kiss.

BEN (CONT'D)
Troy, Kevin, Lori, you know. Everybody else, this is Lindsey.

They all "Hi Lindsey" then discuss trading tickets with each other.

LINDSEY
Party?

BEN
(with a flourish)
It's Draft Day!

She indicates it's whooshing over her head.

BEN (CONT'D)
We get organized for the season. We work out who I'm taking to each game.

He shows her the schedule.

BEN (CONT'D)
You still have Opening Day.

LINDSEY
I wanted to talk to you about something.

BEN
Sure. We'll take a break.
(to everyone)
Listen, there's nice Armenian cold cuts thanks to Mr. Abdo.

MR. ABDO smiles.

TROY
(bitterly)
I don't think they're worth two Sunday games. They're kinda' dry.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Lindsey enter. He envelops her and kisses her.

BEN
You know, you're the only person I would interrupt Draft Day for. I set aside several games for you, because I know you're going to like it. And I got you a birthday present.

LINDSEY
Oh...

He OPENS his CLOSET and reveals a brand-new Red Sox warm-up jacket.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Oh.

BEN
For when you go with me to the game. Put it on. This is authentic. This is what the players wear.

She puts it on. She looks cute.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm not sure why but this is getting *me* hot.

There's an impatient KNOCK on the bedroom door.

TROY
The cold cuts are gone, let's go in there!

BEN
Five minutes!

He looks at her. He's in love.

LINDSEY
I saw you on ESPN.

BEN
What?! You're kidding! Did we look like *morons*?

LINDSEY
Not you, so much.

He LAUGHS.

BEN
So what's up?

LINDSEY
(carefully)
I guess I didn't quite realize how...

She spreads her arms, indicating "big."

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
this Red Sox thing is with you.

BEN
What do you mean? I told you. I --
(upset)
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN (CONT'D)
Okay, see, this is what always happens. It...

LINDSEY
Hey, hey, wait a minute don't jump off a building, we're just talking.

BEN
I'm sorry. I... knee-jerk. I --

LINDSEY
I really hit a nerve there, huh?

Ben nods.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(teasing)
You need a hug?

Amused, he hugs.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(joking)
I didn't say you could cop a feel...

He LAUGHS. They separate.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I didn't say you couldn't.

He laughs again and he hugs her again.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
All right. I think there's a better way for us to approach this. This Red Sox thing?... It's good.

BEN
(intrigued)
Oh?

LINDSEY
Yeah. After all, I really have to push myself this summer very hard if I want that promotion. And it's always been hard for me to service the job, myself, and a relationship -- so the fact that you're so... consumed by this, means you won't feel neglected all summer and I won't have to feel guilty for doing my job. You know so... I think this is perfect.

INT. JUICE BAR - NIGHT

Lindsey and her friends. While her friends argue Lindsey half-listens, half-thinks -- but never speaks.

ROBIN
(to Lindsey)
Dump him.

SARAH
What?!

ROBIN
Give him the bootski.

MOLLY
The bootski? She can't give him the bootski. She loves him.

SARAH
(to Lindsey)
You do?

ROBIN
She doesn't.

MOLLY
She said.

SARAH
She said she loves him? To you?

MOLLY
She said she was looking at him and imagining being with him in the future. That's a big step for her. She hasn't been like that with anyone since Hank.

ROBIN
Who I liked.

SARAH
Who you liked a little too much.

MOLLY
(to Lindsey)
Remember what you told me about Steve and his trains? To just accept it and leave it alone? "Who's he hurting?" you said.

CONTINUED:

SARAH
(dubiously)
Yeah, but this Red Sox thing sounds worse. This is an obsession not an infantile hobby.

MOLLY
No, it...
(offended)
What do you mean?

SARAH
I mean your Christmas cards. You and him in the train outfits waving.

MOLLY
At least we send cards. Not freaking Christmas E-mails.

ROBIN
We're off the subject.
(to Lindsey)
Look, maybe I'm wrong. If he means that much to you, don't break up with him... just change him.

SARAH
Change him?

ROBIN
(pantomiming with her hands)
Bend him to your will. Mold him. He's hot steel. Pound him and pound him until you get what you want.

SARAH
Is that what you did with Chris?

ROBIN
Yes.

SARAH
He doesn't resent it? He doesn't feel emasculated.

ROBIN
(matter-of-factly)
I blow him.

SARAH
Oh.

CONTINUED: (2)

Pause.

MOLLY
Would you do Steve? Maybe he'd give up those stupid-ass trains.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY - SPRING - 12:30 P.M.

TITLE CARD: "THE SEASON"

OPENING DAY

There's nothing like it, especially at Fenway Park. It's a cool, but sunny day. It has the feel of a big event combined with a street fair. Literally thousands of PEOPLE, all in a wonderful mood, bustle around outside the park. SOUVENIR and FOOD STANDS abound.

Winter is over, spring is here and the Red Sox haven't broken any hearts yet. We find Ben, in Red Sox jacket and hat standing, waiting under or near an obvious landmark site (like the "F" in the "Fenway Park" sign in bricks). He seems a little worried and impatient. He checks his watch. Suddenly Lindsey steps up behind him.

LINDSEY
(a little breathless)
Hi.

He's delighted to see her.

BEN
Hey! You made it.

He checks her out. She's spiffed out for a big business meeting and carries a stylish bag.

BEN (CONT'D)
(re: her outfit)
You're all...

LINDSEY
I came straight from work.

They head for the turnstiles. Ben bellows with excitement.

EXT. BOX SEATS - A LITTLE LATER

It's almost game time. The place is filling up. Ben is in his glory. This is Chistmas-times-two. He shows Lindsey to his seats. They're excellent.

CONTINUED:

BEN
(proudly)
Hah?

LINDSEY
Hm?

BEN
Look at these seats.

She stares at them.

BEN (CONT'D)
I mean their proximity to the field.

LINDSEY
Oh.
(looks at the field)
They're close.

BEN
You can't buy these seats. You have to inherit them. A guy offered me a hundred thousand dollars for them.

LINDSEY
And you didn't sell them?

BEN
If I'm ever in a real jam and no one wants my kidneys I'll consider it.

Ben, joyfully makes contact with his "neighbors" whom he hasn't seen in six months. It's like a happy family reunion..

BEN (CONT'D)
Hey!

BEAR HUGS

BEN (CONT'D)
Al!! How've you been?

Al is the same guy we met in 1978. He's 60 now.

AL
(cheerfully)
I'm on dialysis.

BEN
Right on. Al, this is Lindsey.

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDSEY
Hi, Al.

AL
Hi. Al Waterman. Have a sponge.

LINDSEY
... Thank you.

She looks at Ben for an explanation.

BEN
(loudly enough for Al to hear)
Al was the first guy I met at my first Red Sox game. He's aged horribly.

Al CHUCKLES.

BEN (CONT'D)
These are the Belnaps. Artie and Viv.

They're fifty. They're dressed in Red Sox regalia. They wave happily. They look like a perfect couple.

ARTIE/VIV
Hi...

BEN
They've been divorced for 20 years but they still share the seats.

He sees something that shocks and bewilders him.

BEN (CONT'D)
... Teresa?!

ANGLE ON A THIRTYISH, FAIRLY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

TERESA nods.

BEN (CONT'D)
Oh my God!! What happened to you?!

TERESA
I lost two hundred pounds. I had my stomach stapled shut.

BEN
(joking)
A doctor or you did it yourself?

CONTINUED: (3)

TERESA
(joking back)
I did it to attract you, and here you are with Luscious.
(Lindsey)

LINDSEY
(to Ben)
It's quite a little group you've got here.

BEN
It's my summer family.

QUICK MONTAGE OF OPENING DAY MOMENTS

Player Intros.

First ball ceremony.

National Anthem.

The game begins.

EXT. BOX SEATS - LATER

Lindsey is on her PHONE with the headset, not paying attention to the game.

LINDSEY
(into phone)
... Did you ask Schuyler?... Oh. Well--
(to Ben)
What time do you think we'll be done here?

Ben does not enjoy this question.

BEN
It's not like a Broadway show where it ends after the big Hawaiian number. You're missing all the... ambience. The --

LINDSEY
We have a big meeting at five-thirty, I had to leave work at twelve to meet you here, my people aren't prepared...

He lets it go. But he's pretty disappointed. She's ruining this for him. She glances up and absorbs what he's feeling. She thinks for a moment and makes a decision.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
You know what? I took the afternoon off. Figure it out and I'll see you later.

She removes her headset, turns off her phone, throws it in her bag hooks her arm around Ben's arm and smiles. He smiles and squeezes her cheeks with his free hand.

BEN
What are you doing Friday?

LINDSEY
You tell me.

EXT. BOX SEATS - FRIDAY NIGHT

Ben and Lindsey seem to be having fun. Lindsey is dressed *more casually now.*

BEN
You know what's great about baseball? You can't fake it. In anything else you don't really have to be great. You know? Business, music, art, you can get lucky. You can fool everyone for a while. Not sports. Not baseball. You cannot fake talent on that field. You can have a lucky day, but not a lucky career. There's a scoreboard out there. You can bullshit your way through life, but not baseball.

The HITTER drives one out of the park, the place goes wild. Lindsey is delighted, soaking up the immense energy of the crowd.

ANOTHER NIGHT

They're leaving the park after a game.

BEN (CONT'D)
It's a little like math, you know? It's orderly. Win or lose it's fair, it adds up. It's not as confused or ambiguous as...

LINDSEY
Life?

BEN
... Yeah. It's... safe.

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER NIGHT

AL
Did you hear Clemens said when he goes into the Hall of Fame he wants to be wearing a Yankees cap?

BEN
Yeah? Well that moves him to the top of the list.

AL
What list?

BEN
Player I'd most like to see hit by a car.

Lindsey sits down next to Ben. She has a white plastic bag, FILLED WITH BOOKS. Ben peeks in.

BEN (CONT'D)
What did you do, buy out the store?

LINDSEY
I bought every Red Sox book they have. Including the Nomar Garciaparra cookbook. I'm tired of being the most ignorant person in this section.

She SHUFFLES THROUGH her books.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Hey, do you believe in this? "The Curse of the Bambino"?

BEN
It's not funny.

LINDSEY
But the Bambino was Babe Ruth, right?

BEN
That's right. And he started out with the Red Sox. They were great. They were the Yankees.

AL
They won the World Series
(ticks off on his fingers)
1912, 1915, 1916, 1918. They were royalty. The elite.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Al was there. Then in 1919, their miserable, greedy pig of an owner sold Babe Ruth to the Yankees to finance a Broadway musical.

TERESA
"No, No Nanette." I will never ever see that piece of crap!

BEN
And since that day the Red Sox have never won another World Series.

ARTIE
And the thing is, they don't just lose. They raise it to an art form.

BEN
That's right! They tease, they wink, they beckon... They sing their siren song "This is the year... look at us... we have pitching we have power"... soon we're mesmerized. "We're in first place. It's July! It's August!! I can smell it! I can taste it. A championship!" Then WHAM!! -- right in the face with a 35-ounce bat.

AL
Boom -- Jim Lonborg on two day's rest.

VIV
Bam -- Jim Burton pitching to Joe Morgan.

TERESA
Pow -- Bucky Dent.

BEN
Bam-bam-bam-bam-bam, the 1986 World Series. That... is the Curse of the Bambino.

She stares at them. They're all drained.

LINDSEY
Sorry I asked.

ANOTHER NIGHT

Lindsey is on her feet in panicky excitement. She's yelling towards the base runners.

CONTINUED: (3)

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Go! Go! No go back! No, you go. No, you're on the same base!
(to Ben, panicky)
What should they do?!

ANOTHER NIGHT

Lindsey is on her feet again, but this time she's yelling furiously at the nearest Umpire.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
He was safe! You're incompetent! You're undertrained for your position!

BEN
(tugging on her)
"You blind asshole" is all that's required.

LINDSEY
Oh.
(yells)
You --

CUT TO:

ANOTHER NIGHT

The Sox win again. They JUMP UP AND DOWN.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - A HALF-HOUR LATER

It's empty. Quiet. Suddenly, the bedroom door bangs open, violently and Ben and Lindsey crash in, already lip-locked and pulling each other's clothes off.

LINDSEY (V.O.)
It was like jungle sex. It was like he was just released from prison. Every time they win.

INT. BOXING GYM - DAY

This is a Club where women can go to work out with boxing gloves. Heavy bags hang from the ceiling. It's not ratty. It caters to a nice crowd. Lindsey and her friends are into this now. They're all hitting the bags. Part of Lindsey's workout gear has a Red Sox logo.

MOLLY
What happens when they lose?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
Then it tends to be more in the area of pity sex.

ROBIN
You know what's happening here?
(points to the logo)
You're being colonized.

LINDSEY
I'm what?

ROBIN
Colonized. It's like in the old days. The English or the French, would go into Asia or Africa, raise their flag, impose their culture, and colonize.
(to Sarah)
It's like you when you cut your hair because that guy liked short hair.

LINDSEY
Wait a minute.
(to Robin and Molly)
You guys are married. Isn't that a big part of it? Accommodating each other? How many kids are you going to have, when are you going to have sex, where are you going to live, what pizza place are you going to order from... Doesn't it all require... pliability? Who knows, maybe that's something I've been lacking a little...
(looks around)
No?

ROBIN
All this "accomodating?" Is it affecting your work?

LINDSEY
(it is)
... no

Molly stops hitting the bag.

MOLLY
(to Robin)
You know what I just realized. You're rooting for her relationship to fail.

(CONTINUED)

ROBIN
What?!

MOLLY
That's right.

SARAH
No!

LINDSEY
Let's not --

ROBIN
(offended)
Why would I do that?

MOLLY
Nnnn... never mind.

Molly goes back to hitting the bag.

ROBIN
No, tell me.

Molly stops again.

MOLLY
All right. You and Lindsey are both very competitive. Especially with each other.

ROBIN
She's more competitive than I am.

LINDSEY
I am not!

MOLLY
(ignoring them)
And when you were both starting out you were the more successful one. But now Lindsey's career has sky rocketed and she's more successful, but you've had the personal success, the marriage... So now if Lindsey gets that too then she's definitely the winner so you're rooting against her.

There's an uncomfortable pause.

Suddenly, Robin, without even thinking SLUGS MOLLY IN THE JAW, knocking her down. Lindsey and Sarah SCREAM.

CONTINUED: (3)

Immediately Robin is horrified by what she's done. Lindsey kneels to help Molly.

ROBIN
Oh my God!
(crying)
What did I do?!

SARAH
We're not coming here anymore.

TITLE CARD:

"JUNE. THEY TEASE. THEY WINK. THEY BECKON."

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

The sign outside says "Third Base Saloon. Last stop on the way home."

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

This bar has a heavy sports vibe. Old, neighborhood, working-class. Pictures of old Red Sox, banners, uniform jerseys, etc. It's CROWDED with a very working-class crowd of serious Sox fans, including women. The Red Sox game is on all the TVs.

Ben is there. It's noisy and all attention is on the game. There is also much drinking. Lindsey looking a little frazzled slips in next to Ben.

LINDSEY
Hi.

BEN
Hi. What happened to you? It's ten-thirty.

LINDSEY
(annoyed)
There are four of us up for this same job. So the other three... idiots, just sit there, all night, daring each other to be the first one to leave. It's just... stupid corporate gamesmanship!

BEN
And you play along?

LINDSEY
Damn right, I'm not gonna be the first one to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone's attention returns to the TV. They SHOUT encouragement. A member of the opposition gets a big hit. GROANS, CURSES. A MAN next to Lindsey expounds:

LEON
This is why I have a spastic colon. Every time the Red sox screw up it pig-tails my intestines. They're literally making me sick!

LINDSEY
(sympathetically)
You know it's only a game.

The place goes silent, like a Western saloon before the gunfight. After a heavy silence a blue-collar YOUNG WOMAN speaks.

CHARLENE
(threateningly)
What did you say?

BEN
... she said "it's a crying shame."

CHRISTIE
(Charlene's pal)
No, I'm a court reporter -- what she said was "It's only a game."

Another threatening silence.

BEN
(sotto, to Lindsey)
Start moving towards the door.

LINDSEY
I only --

BEN
(sotto)
I'll try to hold them off.

Lindsey starts to leave. Ben starts to back out, between Lindsey and the mob.

BEN (CONT'D)
She's... on medication... and she lost her job... and her parents died...
(urgently, to Lindsey)
Go! Go!

Lindsey and Ben dash out the door and escape into the night.

INT. LINDSEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ben is ASLEEP in Lindsey's bed. He's alone. We see the clock. It's 3:10. We see light under the door.

INT. LINDSEY'S LIVING ROOM

Lindsey is working hard, fighting exhaustion.

TITLE CARD:

"JULY. THE SURGE FOR FIRST."

INT. RYAN AND MYERSON OFFICES - DAY

MR. MYERSON (40s) is acting as host to a good-looking MALE CLIENT. Mr. Myerson is showing him around and selling. They walk and talk.

MYERSON
We could take on your project immediately. In fact, I know just who I want to give it to. This lady is a dynamo. Unstoppable.

They reach Carrie's desk. Carrie looks up and gets tense in the presence of the Boss. Reflexively, she begins straightening up her work space.

Myerson leads The Client right to Lindsey's office and OPENS the DOOR.

Lindsey is at her desk, HER HEAD BACK, facing up, and SNORING LOUDLY. In fact, she does one of those machine-gun snores. Her legs are spread and in one hand, she has an open can of Diet soda, tilted and slowly spilling out on to the carpet.

Myerson is ANGRY and embarrassed in front of The Client. He and the client leave Lindsey's office.

As Myerson, barrels past Carrie's desk:

MEYERSON
(seething)
When she wakes up, I want to see her.

EXT. BOX SEATS - NIGHT

Lindsey is busily pecking away at her laptop during the game. She's literally paying no attention to the game.

CONTINUED:

She is there in body only. Ben gives her a couple of less than happy glances. OTHER PEOPLE also seem peeved at this apparent waste of a good seat.

BEN
We're up.

LINDSEY
(doesn't care)
M-hm.

Ben is ANNOYED.

BEN
When do you find out about that promotion?

LINDSEY
(while she works)
Next month.

BEN
So this is how it's gonna be, 'til then?

LINDSEY
Ben, this is my third game this week. I have to leave work at six... we don't get back 'til eleven, then... you and I go at it and that's all time lost.
(quickly)
I don't mean lost, I mean it's time I have to make up. I already got half my ass chewed off by my boss.

She goes back to work.

Ben spots a VENDOR.

BEN
(signals)
Yo.
(to Lindsey)
You want a hot dog?

LINDSEY
(disgusted by the thought)
Please.

BEN
(to the Vendor)
One.

CONTINUED: (2)

He digs out his wallet and starts to pay. WE HEAR the bat hit the ball. PEOPLE around Ben rise slightly. Ben senses the ball pass right through their area.

BEN (CONT'D)
Whoa. That was close.
(turns back towards Lindsey)
Did you see where --?

Lindsey's seat is empty.

Ben looks around.

INT. MRI TUBE - THAT NIGHT

Lindsey (fully conscious, but with a huge lump on her forehead) is sliding into the tube.

INT. LINDSEY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ben is ON Lindsey's PHONE.

BEN
No, they didn't find anything. She's fine, I swear. She's lying down, she -- hold on, she's got another call... okay, she'll call you tomorrow.
(hits "flash")
Hello... Troy?... Now?... Okay, thanks.
(hangs up)

He runs into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lindsey is lying in bed with ICE ON her HEAD.

BEN
Honey, you're on ESPN.

He PICKS UP remote and turns on the TV. He changes channels.

ON THE TV

A Red Sox hitter fouls a line drive into the box seats. IN SLOW-MOTION it hits Lindsey who was paying no attention to the game. Her head rocks back, then her body recoils forward and she does a complete 360 over the seat in front of her.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'll tell you, you are limber you know? The way you...

He twirls his index fingers to indicate how she flipped over.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'll just let you sleep.

LINDSEY
No, Ben...

She removes the ice revealing the huge lump. He jumps back, cringing.

BEN
Oh, gee you've got a whole other head there.

LINDSEY
Well the *one* that talks wants to say something... I think you should go to the games from now on and I should stay home.

BEN
Because of this?

LINDSEY
No. Because I've become one of those people I hate. One of those people who gets a boyfriend and -- poof -- their whole prior life suddenly vanishes. I have to *focus* on work for a while. I have to. Besides, I know you'll have a better time at the game with Troy or Kevin or Lori. You won't be worrying if I'm having a good time...

BEN
I don't worry about that. No, I mean --

LINDSEY
(affectionately)
Look... you go to the games, I'll stay at the office. Then when the game's over, you call me. And I will race home like I'm scoring the winning run, and I will make myself
(coyly)
... "ready" for you.

BEN
Ooo.

LINDSEY
I'll pour some wine, fill the tub...

BEN
You'll put those candles around?

LINDSEY
(winks)
M-hm.

BEN
The vanilla bubble bath?

LINDSEY
Sure.

BEN
(pleased)
Oo... likee-likee.

LINDSEY
(puts the ice bag back on her head)
Now leave me alone.

INT. LINDSEY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lindsey is in the tub. CANDLES are LIT. Lindsey looks tired. Her lump has diminished. WE HEAR:

BEN (O.C.)
(on the phone, agitated)
I know but that's not what cost us the game... we still had a lead in the eighth inning.

LINDSEY
(wearily)
Ben...

BEN (O.C.)
(to Lindsey)
I'll be right there.
(back on the phone)
I agree, more runs would help, but those games we blow in the bullpen hurt worse than the games we don't score.

Ben, on Lindsey's cellphone PEEKS quickly into the bathroom.

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
(to Lindsey)
I'll be one second, sweetie, I love you. I can't get him off the phone, he has no life.

WE FOLLOW Ben into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEN
(into phone)
What?... No, he stinks. He's useless... Troy, that was four years ago. Now he stinks... Well, we're not getting what we need from the farm system. That's the root of it.

Still, on the phone, he circles back towards the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEN
(into phone)
No power, no speed. They bring up these -

He notices that Lindsey has FALLEN ASLEEP in the tub and is just now sliding down below the water, her face going under.

This WAKES HER UP. She comes up choking. After, a coughing jag she catches her breath.

Ben enters.

BEN (CONT'D)
(eagerly)
I'm ready.

She gives him a WET GLARE.

TITLE CARD:

"SEPTEMBER. TWO GAMES BEHIND."

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM -EVENING

Lindsey is mixing and matching ties and shirts and jackets from Ben's drawers and closet. She seems a little frantic as the bathroom door OPENS.

CONTINUED:

BEN
What about this outfit?

Ben enters wearing a sweater-shirt and pants with his athletic supporter on outside his pants. She stares. Then resumes yanking through his closet.

BEN (CONT'D)
Nothing? No laugh?

LINDSEY
This is not a man's closet!

BEN
What do you mean?

LINDSEY
One pair of shoes?! You're a man-boy. Half-man, half-boy. You should see how my sister's husband dresses. A professional came in and did his closet.
(indicates)
Suit. Suit. Suit. Suit.

BEN
Is that what this is about? You want your parents to like me better than they like your brother-in-law?

LINDSEY
Oh, come on, that is so -- yes. Okay? My parents are very nice, but they happen to put a lot of stock in appearances. Especially my Dad.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

OPEN ON a CLOSE-UP of Doug's (Lindsey's father) hair. He's letting the white grow out again, but the top half of his hair is still yet black.

MAUREEN (O.C.)
He looks like a skunk.

REVEAL

Lindsey, Ben, Doug and Maureen are having dinner at a barbecue restaurant. They're in the middle of the meal. Ben, in particular, is really going to town on a rack of ribs.

CONTINUED:

DOUG
(to Maureen)
You're the one who told me to grow it out.

MAUREEN
(friendly)
Ben, did you know that I was a school teacher for 27 years?

BEN
M-hm. And now you're a principal

MAUREEN
M-hm.

BEN
(to Doug)
And...
(to Lindsey)
Did you tell me what your dad does?

DOUG
I sell golf carts.

BEN
(as if fascinated)
Ohhh... Well, that... doesn't leave us much to talk about.

Doug LAUGHS.

DOUG
That's funny. 'Cause every other guy she's gone out with has tried to get a free golf cart out of me.

BEN
Never played a round in my life.

MAUREEN
We love it.

LINDSEY
They play...
(a lot)

DOUG
We wanted to get on at Brookline while we were here but --

CONTINUED: (2)

A COUPLE we don't know enters. They're near Ben and Lindsey's table.

WIFE
(points at another table)
There they are.
(calls out)
Hi. Sorry, we're late.

LADY AT OTHER TABLE
Everything all right?

WIFE
(re: her husband)
This one. I couldn't get him out of the house. He was watching the Red Sox game.

Ben looks up PANICKY. He looks at his hands. They're very greasy.

MAN AT OTHER TABLE
Yeah? How'd they do?

HUSBAND
They --

As that conversation continues Ben panics worse. His hands are useless. He begins making fairly loud a-da-da-da-da-da-da noises continuously to drown out the nearby conversation.

The Meekses look at him like he's having some kind of fit. The "da-da-da"ing continues unabated. Everyone in the restaurant is staring.

Lindsey is at first SHOCKED, then begins to tune in to Ben's problem. Ben shows her his greasy hands and indicates the Husband standing nearby. He wiggles his fingers near his ears.

LINDSEY
(gets it)
Oh!

Lindsey uses her hands to cover Ben's ears. The Meekses find this even more bewildering. Lindsey waits until...

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(removing her hands from his ears)
They're gone.

Ben stops making the noises.

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN
(relieved, but still shaken)
... oh, man!

Lindsey looks at ther parents who are staring, STUNNED, at her and Ben.

LINDSEY
(to her parents)
Ben... is taping the Red Sox game... and he doesn't like to hear the score... and he couldn't cover his ears because he had greasy fingers, so... I did it.

She realizes how loony this sounds and how colonized she is.

INT. LINDSEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ben and Lindsey are in bed. Lindsey is working and Ben is reading. He closes his book and lays it down. He looks at her for a few seconds. She ignores him.

BEN
I'm getting a little tired. You... wanna...?
(indicates her work)

A little annoyed, she goes through the effort of gathering up her work. She gets out of bed and heads for the bedroom door.

LINDSEY
Good-night.

BEN
(surprised)
Wait a minute, where're you going?

LINDSEY
The living room. You said you wanted to go to sleep.

BEN
Well, but, I... I mean... don't you want to...?

LINDSEY
(sighs)
... All right, can we make it a quick one?

BEN
Boy, we're really ahead of schedule.

LINDSEY
What do you mean?

BEN
We're not supposed to lose interest until like a year from now.

LINDSEY
Look, if we make a big deal out of it, I'll be exhausted, you'll roll over and I'll still have all this work to do.

BEN
(a little edgy)
You know this work thing is like...

LINDSEY
Like what?

BEN
Well, I mean... it seems to be ruling your whole life.

LINDSEY
Yeah, well, it's my work. You know it's... we're not all lucky enough to go home at three.

BEN
I don't go home at three -- I help coach the baseball team and I have papers to grade --

LINDSEY
Math papers. They're either right or wrong!

BEN
All right, I'm just saying that if you're in a relationship you need to... make an effort. You --

LINDSEY
(blows up)
What?!!

BEN
(scared)
Uh-oh.

LINDSEY
An effort?!

Ben knows he's stepped in it, but isn't sure how.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I have pulled several major muscle groups making an effort. What have you done? Other than go "da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da?"

BEN
I --

LINDSEY
You embarrassed me tonight. And I embarrassed me. I covered your ears. In front of my parents, I covered your ears.

BEN
I would do it for you. I would... cover anything for you. I --

LINDSEY
Oh really? Well then why didn't you do this for me? Why didn't you say to yourself "These are Lindsey's parents. They're meeting me for the first time. This is a very very important night for her. My first priority should be to make them like me so Lindsey will be happy. Instead of going da-da-da-da-da-da-da so I don't hear the score of the Red Sox game!"

She exits.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Her desk seems chaotic. She seems harried. She's looking for something. Carrie enters.

CARRIE
How'd it go last night?

LINDSEY
(drily)
Fabulous.

CARRIE
Mr. Halpern wants to see you.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
If these windows could open, I'd jump.

CARRIE
And your mother's on line one.

Lindsey hits the phone.

LINDSEY
Mom?...

Carrie exits.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
(ebullient)
Hi, hon.

LINDSEY
Mom, can I call you back? Where are you?

MAUREEN (V.O.)
We're still in Boston.

LINDSEY
Why? You had a ten AM flight.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
We switched. Ben came over to the hotel and said he wanted to spend the day with us.

LINDSEY
Ben? My Ben?

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Yes. He planned everything. He can't do enough for us. Right now, he's washing your father's balls.

Lindsey, literally, FALLS OUT OF her rolling DESK CHAIR. She climbs back up.

LINDSEY
What?!

EXT. GOLF COURSE - SAME

Ben is using a GOLFBALL WASHER. He removes a ball.

BEN
(to Doug)
Clean enough?

CONTINUED:

DOUG
Perfect.

Maureen, on a cellphone, STEPS INTO THE SHOT.

MAUREEN
He got us a ten AM tee time at Brookline... I don't know, one of his students' father is in charge of the sprinklers... Sure.
(offering the phone)
Benny? It's Lindsey.

She hands the phone to Ben.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - SAME

LINDSEY
Benny?...

BEN (V.O.)
Hey, Linds!

EXT. GOLF COURSE - SAME

BEN
... I took half a sick day. I only missed two classes.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - SAME

LINDSEY
I thought you save your sick days for Red Sox games...

BEN (V.O.)
Hey, you have to make an effort.

She smiles.

LINDSEY
(romantically)
I'll see you tonight.

Happy, she hangs up. She sits dreamily for a moment. Suddenly, she bolts out of her chair.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Mr. Halpern!

She rushes out.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Ben is teaching. He wears a demim shirt and a Red Sox tie.

TWO KIDS are at the blackboard one at each end. They're racing each other to finish an elaborate problem.

Each one represents half of the class. The STUDENTS in their seats CHEER for the one representing their half as if it's a swim meet or a race. It's getting very loud.

One kid wins. His (or her) side goes wild.

The other kid at the board twists his (or her) body in frustration, barely beaten by a second or two.

Ben physically comforts the loser. (It's not a serious crisis for the kid. Ben is just being funny.)

The DOOR OPENS and an IRRITABLE MALE TEACHER enters.

MR. MUNSELL
Excuse me! A little loud don't you think?

BEN
We're sorry, Mr. Munsell. The kids' drugs just kicked in.

Ben shrugs as if to say "What can I do?"

MR. MUNSELL
Teenage drug use is not funny.

He exits.

Pause.

BEN
(romantically)
God how I love that man. Okay -- the Final is next Tuesday...

GROANS

Ben grabs a WHIP and cracks it.

BEN (CONT'D)
Back! Back you animals! Now one of the ten problems on the hand-out sheet is going to be on tomorrow's quiz.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
But I'm not telling you which one. So you'll have to study all of them.

Ben passes a kid (ARTHUR) who looks overwhelmed. His folder is falling apart. He looks NERVOUS. His arm is in a cast.

Ben surreptitiously holds up SEVEN FINGERS TO HIM winks, and mouthes "seven" so only Arthur gets the info. At first Arthur has no idea what Ben means. Finally, Ben circles it on Arthur's page. Arthur finally gets it and is very grateful.

Ben pats him, on the shoulder, encouragingly.

The BELL RINGS.

As the kids leave:

BEN (CONT'D)
Study you maniacs. Oh -- and we're having try-outs next week for varsity baseball. Just to avoid the confusion we had last year let me state that this year we're looking for good players.

Some of Ben's students see something OFF-CAMERA and respond with WOLF-WHISTLES and "YOWS."

Ben turns and sees Lindsey in the doorway. He's SURPRISED. She enters. She's EXCITED.

LINDSEY
Hi.

BEN
Hi. What --

LINDSEY
I have very exciting news. I couldn't wait to tell you.

BEN
You got the promotion?!

LINDSEY
Not yet. But, right after we spoke? -- Mr. Halpern called me into his office. I was trying to be cool, but
(lowers her voice)
between you and me, I was ready to wash his balls if you know what I mean.

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN
See, that joke's not fun for me.

LINDSEY
Sorry. It's just, I was scared, because last month, he chewed me out. Anyway, we're trying to make a deal with this European company. They make -- you wouldn't care -- anyway, he's sending me -- to Paris -- to close the deal.

BEN
Wow!

LINDSEY
And... I'm taking yous!

BEN
Moi?!

LINDSEY
Oui.

BEN
You're taking me to Paris?!

LINDSEY
I'll cash in my first class ticket and we'll go business class. All you need to do is take another sick day tomorrow and we're on our way.

BEN
Wait a minute. You mean it's this weekend? It's now?

LINDSEY
We'll fly back Sunday night. With the time change you can be back at work on Monday.

She sees that he looks a little stressed. The joy is gone from his eyes.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
What's--?

She gets it. There are baseball tickets sticking up out of his shirt pocket.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(gets it)
Oh.

BEN
(thinking out loud)
It's just we're only two games behind the Yankees with three weeks to go. You know, this is when they need me.

She just absorbs this for a moment.

LINDSEY
When they need you?!

BEN
I --

LINDSEY
Have a nice weekend.

She goes. He CHASES HER into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BEN
Wait a second, I was just thinking about it, that's all.

Lindsey turns on him.

LINDSEY
When a hot chick says she's taking you to Paris for the weekend you don't think about it!

BEN
All right, I'll go, okay?

LINDSEY
You'll go okay? No. I'd sooner take him.

She indicates an odd-looking OVERWEIGHT STUDENT.

STUDENT
Where are we going?

She goes. Ben starts to chase.

EXT. SHCOOL

Ben RUNS OUTSIDE and looks for Lindsey. He spots her, then catches up to her. He stops her. He's half-apologetic, half-annoyed.

BEN
Just slow down a second, okay? Just be a little less... You.

LINDSEY
Just go and enjoy your ballgame.

BEN
You *know*, this is the second day in a *row* you've flown up my nose.

She HESITATES for a second.

THEN:

LINDSEY
I'm late.

BEN
Fine. Go.

LINDSEY
No, Ben... I'm late.

She indicates her body.

BEN
Oh. *How...?*

LINDSEY
A week-and-a-half.

BEN
That's not so late.

LINDSEY
It is for me.

BEN
I see... well... then... okay... so... what... what should... what...

LINDSEY
Deep breaths, Ben.

He takes a DEEP BREATH.

BEN
Why didn't you say something?

LINDSEY
Why, so we could both freak out? I was waiting until I was -- anyway, then this trip came up today and I thought okay we'll go to Paris and I'll tell you about it there. And... I don't know, it'll be... special. But then I invite you and you don't see the two of us in Paris tangled in the sheets with... grapes and chocolate in the bed and the breeze blowing the curtains and the Eiffel Tower in the window and the guy in the next room yelling
(French accent)
"Hey you two, don't you ever stop?" No. You see the White Sox are coming and Pedro's pitching Friday.

BEN
(mumbles)
Saturday. Look, I admit I should've reacted differently. I didn't know about...

LINDSEY
All right. Right now, I've got a ten o'clock flight. So...

BEN
Well, I can pack, I can throw something in a --

LINDSEY
It's already off to a bad start. Let's just... We'll talk when I get back.

BEN
You're sure? I mean, you're all right?

LINDSEY
(nods)
Give me a kiss and wish me luck.

BEN
(kisses her)
Good luck.

She leaves. He's uneasy.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - 2 AM

Ben is SLEEPING. But ESPN is on the TV. The PHONE RINGS. He's startled awake. He answers it.

BEN
Hello...

LINDSEY (V.O.)
(calmly)
I got it.

BEN
Who -- Lindsey?

LINDSEY (V.O.)
I got it.

BEN
... The promotion?

LINDSEY (V.O.)
... my period.

SILENCE.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Lindsey, in her nightgown, on the phone.

Neither she or Ben speaks.

BACK TO BEN

LINDSEY (V.O.)
I can tell you were sleeping so I'll call you later.

BEN
Hey, Linds?

LINDSEY (V.O.)
Yeah?

BEN
You okay?

LINDSEY
Yeah.

BEN
... Safe flight.

They HANG UP. He lies there for a moment. We can't tell what he's thinking. He gets up and goes to his dresser. On top of it is a small PAPER SHOPPING BAG. He reaches into it and removes two items -- a Red Sox Teddy bear and a baby-sized Red Sox shirt. He unfolds the shirt and looks at it. Then he places both items inside a dresser drawer and shuts the drawer.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Lindsey and Ben walk to Ben's car. Ben is carrying her LARGEST BAG. Lindsey is travel weary.

LINDSEY
Maybe it was just job stress. Or, I don't know, I'm 30, maybe my cycle's changing...

BEN
No! Thirty is young.

They reach the car and load it.

BEN (CONT'D)
Did everything else go all right?

LINDSEY
(no joy)
Yep. I kicked ass all the way to the Luxembourg. They hadn't seen anyone that aggressive since the Germans.

They get in.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

BEN
So you're saying it was good.

LINDSEY
(still no joy)
I am the Golden Girl.

They drive. Obviously something is wrong. He thinks about how to proceed.

BEN
Did... you want to have a baby?

LINDSEY
... Eventually.

BEN
Well,... Eventually you will.

LINDSEY
The whole thing definitely got my attention, I'll tell you that.

BEN
What do you mean?

LINDSEY
Look, Ben, if I go out with a guy for eight months and then think I might be having his child, I have to start thinking about "is this the guy and if he is, what's that gonna be like." I mean if we become Mr. and Mrs. Ben and Lindsey what am I dealing with? Like Robin's birthday party. As soon as I got the invitation, I ran to the refrigerator to check the Red Sox schedule. Then I called her and I pleaded with her. "Robin you have to change your party. The Yankees are in town." She said "I can't, we put down a non-returnable deposit on a room." So, of course, I know, I'm going stag. And then I have to think, how far does this go? "Don't die, Grandma. They're leaving on a road trip you can die, then." "Doctor, you better induce labor, the Oakland A's are coming in tomorrow."

BEN
(annoyed)
Do you remember last winter? This is what you said you liked about me. That I was capable of a passionate commitment. A devotion. A --

LINDSEY
Yes! But you feel it for the Red Sox. I thought, at some point, you might re-direct at me.
(starts to get weepy)
All those things you feel for that... team -- I feel all those things for you.
(pause)
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I just need to feel that at the end of the day, I'm the most important thing in somebody's life.

BEN
(quietly, resentfully)
Once again, I'm the worst person in the world.

They ride on in silence.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TRYOUTS -DAY

Ben is on the school baseball team's bench. Tryouts are in progress, but Ben is only watching with one eye. He's talking about his girlfriend troubles. It's worrying him.

BEN
Then they weep. It's never a fair fight... But she's great, you know, I --
(thinks about it)
... the best girl I've ever gone out with. The smartest, the funniest, best-looking...
(a little shyly)
best sex... I mean I've had break-ups before, but... this one would really hurt. This would be a double Buckner. This would be a Buckner, Bucky Dent combo-platter. You know what she told me? She told me I had an addiction. She says it's an addiction if it prevents me from living my life. I said I am living it. I'm living it the way I want. And speaking of addictions, she works ninety-two hours a week. But you see her addiction is more socially acceptable... am I wrong?

REVEAL that Ben has been pouring out his heart to Ryan, the fifteen-year-old Asian kid we met in Ben's car months ago. Ryan is in a baseball uniform.

RYAN
Nobody's "wrong" in these situations. You have wants and needs. She, likewise.

BEN
(yells to someone O.C.)
Get a pitch to hit.
(back to Ryan)
You know there's a reason she's thirty and still single.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
She's turned this birthday party her friend's having into a goddam war. I said to her -- "What if I had to work that night? What if I had a second job? Or what if I was doing charity work? Or... finishing a painting or a novel?" See my point? It's not the time. It's that she has no respect for the way I'm spending my time...

RYAN
I have to bat now, Mr. Wrightman. Let me just leave you with this thought. You love the Red Sox. But have they ever loved you back?

Ryan exits.

Ben thinks a moment, then:

BEN
Lead with your hips.

Casey sits down exactly where Ryan was..

CASEY
(to Ben)
Okay, where were we?

BEN
You know there's a reason she's thirty and still single...

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Lindsey and her father are playing. His hair is all white. DOUG hits a shot, then turns to Lindsey.

DOUG
I'll beat him up.

LINDSEY
(amused)
What?!

DOUG
(casually)
Yeah. He didn't look that tough to me. I'll go back with you to Boston tomorrow and I'll kick his Red Sox-loving ass.

She approaches her shot.

CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
I just don't know my part anymore.

LINDSEY
What part? What do you mean?

She hits her shot. They start walking.

DOUG
When you were little, you had problems, I could fix them. Or I could fool you into thinking I fixed them. You fell off the swings, I took you for ice cream. Now my part is I stand here and watch you be sad. I'm useless.

LINDSEY
Dad, please, don't make me cheer you up, okay?

DOUG
(passionately)
Men are idiots!

LINDSEY
Why classify? We're all idiots. I spent all these years, competing, determined to win. Really... into it, you know? Then, I meet... Baseball Boy and I fall in... The Word. And then, the competing, the winning, it all doesn't seem so important anymore. So I care less about that, but... Now I'm afraid. Because... if he's not the one... I'm left with nothing.

TITLE CARD" "THE BIG SERIES."

EXT. BOX SEATS - NIGHT

It's Friday night. The Yankees are in town. The place is charged. The Red Sox take the field. BEDLAM. Ben has taken Troy to the game. Troy SHOUTS over the crowd noise to Ben.

TROY
There's nothing like this, man! When the Yankees are here and both teams are in the race... you could feel it in the streets all day today. It's in the air.

AL
We sweep these three games we're in first place!

Ben doesn't look quite into it. Troy notices.

TROY
You all right?

BEN
Yeah.
(yells)
Yankees suck!!

TROY
Red Sox rule!!

They KNUCKLE BUMP.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

A big birthday bash for Robin. Robin's husband STEVE (a little snockered) is standing up and reading a poem he's written to his wife. We join him in the middle.

STEVE
... there's no way to measure
what she is worth.
I'm the luckiest man on the face
Of the earth,
Her face, her form, her sweet,
loving smile,
Which I see in the mirror when
we're at it doggie-style.

Robin's table.

ROBIN
(yells)
My parents are here!

Steve's presentation is over. He WOBBLES BACK to his table.

STEVE
I love you, Birthday Girl!

He gives her too big a kiss. Lindsey is the only one at the table who is stag. She feels her singleness. Then she turns and is very SURPRISED.

It's Ben, in a tuxedo, sitting down next to her.

LINDSEY
What are you doing here?

BEN
I was invited.

LINDSEY
I know but... Is it raining?

BEN
No.

LINDSEY
Well then... was the game called?

BEN
No.

LINDSEY
You didn't go?

BEN
I went. I watched one inning and I left.

LINDSEY
Was it that bad?

BEN
No it was nothing-nothing. I left, I found a tuxedo place that's open late and I'm here.

LINDSEY
You left?! I mean you just... you left? After one inning? The Yankees?!

BEN
... It's only a game.

She's amazed.

INT. DANCE FLOOR

Ben and Lindsey do a slow one. They're in love again.

EXT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

VALET PARKING STATION

Lindsey, full of pride in Ben and affection, clings to his arm.

CONTINUED:

At the valet station is a PORTABLE RADIO playing the Red Sox game. It gets Ben's attention for a second. Lindsey moves to COVER HIS HEARS.

BEN
(amused)
No, no, it's all right.

VALET
(disgusted)
Six-nothing Yankees.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That's out of here!

VALET
Seven-nothing.

Lindsey looks at Ben for his reaction. He shrugs as if to say "they're hopeless." She clings to him even more tightly.

INT. LINDSEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

They finish making love. They're both very happy, very satisfied.

BEN
That was... I mean you were... And not just physically. I mean I felt like we were...

LINDSEY
(cuddling)
Mm...

BEN
... I think this might be the best night of my life.

They start to kiss. The PHONE RINGS. She answers it.

LINDSEY
Hello... What?... yeah...
(to Ben)
I think it's Troy, there's a lot of noise.

She exits to the bathroom.

BEN
(into phone)
Hi... What?... What's going on, what's that noise?

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FENWAY PARK - SAME

It's bedlam. New Year's Eve, Mardi Gras, Fourth of July. The street outside the ballpark is mobbed. Conga lines. Girls up on guy's shoulders. Horns. Whistles. V-J Day.

Troy is in the center of the crowd on a cellphone.

TROY
We won!! --
(louder)
We won!! We were losing seven-nothing in the bottom of the ninth. We scored eight runs! Ten straight hits! The last six off Rivera! It was unbelievable! The greatest night in the history of Fenway! It's bedlam. It's chaos!

Ben is listening IN SHOCK.

TROY (CONT'D)
By the end the stands were literally shaking. The fire marshals were asking people in the upper deck to stop jumping up and down. You missed it!! The one game you miss. You missed the greatest game ever!

Ben HANGS UP. He scrambles to find the TV remote. He turns on the TV to the local news.

ON SCREEN

The bedlam outside Fenway. A TV REPORTER is in the crowd.

Ben stares, still stunned.

ON SCREEN

REPORTER
The Red Sox have not won a World Series in 85 years. But even if they do, it's hard to believe the celebration could be any bigger than this one tonight -- or these fans any happier. The Red Sox are now tied for first place --

Ben changes channels. On each channel the celebration is on and a different Reporter is saying similar things.

CONTINUED:

CLICK

REPORTER #2
Astounding --

CLICK

REPORTER #3
Historic --

CLICK

REPORTER #4
Orgasmic --

Ben turns off the TV. Lindsey returns.

LINDSEY
(innocently)
Everything okay?

BEN
They... won.

LINDSEY
(casually)
The Red Sox? Oh. Good. This really is your night.

BEN
No... you don't understand. They scored eight runs in the bottom of the ninth to win eight-seven. It was the best game ever. I can't... I never leave a game. Ever... I can't believe this, this is like a nightmare. No, it's beyond that it's some kind of curse from God. It's...

LINDSEY
Two minutes ago you said it was the best night of your life.

BEN
(snaps)
Two minutes ago it was!

LINDSEY
I didn't tell you to leave that game.

BEN
(bitterly)
No, of course not! You had nothing to do with it. I just, suddenly had a whim, after eleven years of never missing an inning to suddenly prance out of the ballpark during a Yankee game!

He PUNCHES the wall. It cracks.

LINDSEY
Hey, I live here!

His hand hurts.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
And how is this supposed to make me feel? Knowing that nothing between us can ever be as good or mean as much to you as an eight-run rally.

BEN
Yeah, that's it, pile it on. Kick me when I'm down.

LINDSEY
I'm tempted.

His hand hurts. He goes to the kitchen for ice.

She follows him.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Didn't you, yourself, say just two hours ago, "It's only a game?"

He's BANGING ON the ice tray. They're both getting very irritable.

BEN
I said it... because it's what you wanted to hear.

LINDSEY
(frustrated)
But it is just a game, goddammit!!

BEN
(angrily)
Everything is only something unless you love it! Clearly, it is not just a game!
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN (CONT'D)
If it was -- obviously -- I wouldn't care this much. Eighteen years. Do you still care about anything you cared about eighteen years ago? Or ten? Or five? I'll bet there isn't a single thing you've wanted that long.

LINDSEY
No, Ben. There isn't anything I've wanted for eighteen years. Because eighteen years ago I was a kid. And if I did still want the same things I wanted eighteen years ago -- if I still wanted to marry Scott Baio -- I would assume that my life had gone terribly wrong!

BEN
And you're feeling now that your life has gone terribly right?

Pause.

LINDSEY
I was until that phone rang.
(seriously)
It was different for me tonight than it's ever been.

BEN
What?

LINDSEY
I just... gave it up to you. All control, just... I was pure emotion. No thinking, no control just... you had me. Completely. You broke my heart, Ben. Nobody's ever made me feel this unloved.

EXT. LINDSEY'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Ben is alone. He reaches his car. He's carrying belongings he's left at Lindsey's place. It's over. He's sad. He opens his car and tosses his stuff inside. The last item he tosses in is the Red Sox jacket he gave Lindsey. He looks up at Lindsey's windows, then gets in the car and leaves.

INT. LINDSEY'S APARTMENT

She's exhausted. Ernie comes over to be petted.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

A crummy autumn day.

CONTINUED:

OPEN ON THE SCOREBOARD:

The Sox are getting creamed.

TROY (O.C.)
Eight losses in a row! Do the concession stands sell poison?

EXT. BOX SEATS - CONTINUOUS

Ben, Troy and the usual regulars.

TERESA
The Curse of the Bambino.

BEN
This, my friends... Is the best part of being a Red Sox fan.

They all STARE AT HIM.

AL
He snapped.

BEN
I mean it. You want to know the best part of being a Red Sox fan?
(he taps his chest)
It builds character. It toughens you up. It makes you strong. Look at me. I am a callous, my friends. I am years of dead skin. Nothing can scratch me. The shit they put us through? It prepares you for life. Family, work... romance. If a Yankee fan went through what I've been through he'd be destroyed. You heard them after they lost to Arizona.
(pantomimes rubbing teary eyes and mock-cries)
"They beat Rivera, they beat Rivera," Wimps. Weanies.
(proudly)
I am a Red Sox fan. And that means whatever happens, I can take it!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He looks bad. Unshaven. Dirty hair. Food-delivery containers are everywhere. Now Ben is watching a tape of Bill Buckner's famous error in the 1986 World Series.

CONTINUED:

He rewinds it and watches it over and over again, including Vin Scully's call of "... and it gets through Buckner..." Over and over.

WE HEAR, outside his front door, RUNNING FOOTSTEPS then something slamming against the door. Ben doesn't even react.

WE HEAR the running footsteps again followed by another crash against the door, this time causing the door to fly open, REVEALING Troy panting in the doorway having just crashed in. Kevin and Lori are with him. Ben still doesn't react. He just keeps re-running the error. His friends rush in. They take in the whole atmosphere of depression.

LORI
Oh my God.

KEVIN
The Buckner game!

LORI
(angrily, to Kevin)
I thought you took that away from him!

KEVIN
I did!

Troy ejects the tape for Ben's VCR and shows it, accusingly to Ben.

TROY
Where did you get this?!

BEN
I don't remember...

TROY
Don't lie to me! Do you have more of these?! Where's your stash?!

BEN
Leave me alone...

TROY
(re: the tape)
This isn't helping you! Do you understand? This solves nothing! Agh, look at you!
(to Lori)
Help me clean him up.

INT. SHOWER - MINUTES LATER

Ben, naked, stands under a shower. Troy is scrubbing with a long-handled brush, like he's a circus elephant.

BEN
I let her down... I am the Red Sox.

TROY
Turn...
(louder)
Turn!

He does.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Lindsey and Carrie. Lindsey looks tired and disgusted. Carrie is trying to energize her.

CARRIE
How about Frank Bauer?

LINDSEY
He's married!

CARRIE
Not actually. His wife took diet pills *and went insane.*

LINDSEY
(sarcastic)
What a break for me!

CARRIE
You have to go to this thing Saturday. It's a must!

LINDSEY
Uch.

CARRIE
It's either Frank Bauer or Vishnu the janitor.

LINDSEY
This is the worst part of breaking up. The re-boot...
(dreading it)
All right. *So what* do I have to do walk down there and ask him?

CONTINUED:

CARRIE
E-mail.

LINDSEY
(thinks)
You do it.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A bar, music, a dance floor. It's hip.

Ben, Troy, Kevin and Lori at a table, beaten and depressed. But Ben is, at least, cleaned up and back among the living.

Dead soldiers all over the table.

TROY
And so eighty-six years and counting.

KEVIN
There's still three more games.

TROY
(as if to a child)
Yes. But they're four games out. That tends to hinder a comeback, Doctor.

KEVIN
Is that Manny Ramirez?

They look. Red Sox star MANNY RAMIREZ is dancing with a SUPERMODEL TYPE. He's on top of the world.

LORI
That's him.

TROY
He's dancing.

LORI
Yeah...

TROY
(angrily)
He's dancing!

LORI
So?

CONTINUED:

TROY
We're sitting here chewing up our guts over the Red Sox, and there -- a member of the Red Sox -- is dancing.

KEVIN
Ironic.

TROY
I'd like to go over there and tell him off!

BEN
I have two words for you. Simple funeral. And by the way, why shouldn't he be dancing? He played hard. He did his best. It's over. Move on!
(thinks)
You know what... I envy him. Not because of the money. Because that man has perspective. That man has balance.

KEVIN
That man has got an unbelievable babe.

BEN
Yeah? Well, maybe he's got that babe, because he knows his whole life isn't out on that field. It's a life, not an obsession... Holy shit! I am an idiot!

Ben *JUMPS UP* and heads for MANNY RAMIREZ who is escorting his dancing partner towards the bar.

BEN (CONT'D)
Mr. Ramirez. Hi.

MANNY RAMIREZ
(his eyes on the lady)
Not right now.

BEN
No. I just want to tell you, watching you dance just now has changed my life. Thank you.

Ben exits.

MANNY RAMIREZ
(to his date)
That man made me very uncomfortable.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ben comes OFF the ELEVATOR, determined. He heads for Lindsey's door. He KNOCKS. As he does, he realizes that SOME ELSE IS KNOCKING, at the door, too.

He looks. The other guy (Frank) is wearing a tuxedo. Ben looks at him, CONFUSED. Frank is also a little confused, but not nearly as disturbed as Ben is.

Lindsey OPENS the door. She's dressed for a date.

LINDSEY
Hi, I --

She takes in the scene. Ben and Frank both there. She's FLUSTERED.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
What...?

BEN
Who's he?

LINDSEY
He's...

FRANK
(offers his hand)
Frank Bauer.

BEN
(stunned)
What?

LINDSEY
Um, Frank, why don't you go inside for a second? I'll be right in.

Bret complies. Lindsey steps outside and shuts the door.

BEN
Are you on a date?!

LINDSEY
No, no, it's a work thing. There's this party and I didn't want to go alone so --

BEN
That's a date!

LINDSEY
It isn't! I --
(not unkindly)
Ben what are you doing here?

BEN
I wanted to talk to you, I -- I can't believe you're on a date.

LINDSEY
I'm not! I'm just...

She gives up trying to explain.

BEN
All right, look, I'll -- you're going out on your not-a-date so... I'll call you.

He RINGS FOR the ELEVATOR. It's right there, the DOORS OPEN. He get on the elevator and the doors start to close. Lindsey turns to go back to her apartment.

From inside the elevator Ben's arm suddenly stops the doors from closing and he steps back out.

BEN (CONT'D)
No -- look. I came here for a reason. Let me just say this -- you ever notice when people say "let me just say this" it's long and it meanders and -- all right -- I love you... and I think we should give it another chance.

He waits for her to respond. She's uncomfortable. He's getting nervous.

BEN (CONT'D)
Did you hear me?

LINDSEY
Ben...

BEN
Look, just go ahead, go to your thing and I'll hang around here and when you come back, we'll get married.

LINDSEY
(this is difficult)
I don't think so.

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN
What are you saying? You said you wanted more. This is as more as there is. There is no more.

LINDSEY
But this isn't you. This is the other guy.

BEN
What guy?

LINDSEY
It's October. You're becoming Winter guy again. I already know I like Winter Guy. It's Summer Guy who broke my heart.

BEN
Summer Guy is gone!

LINDSEY
Yes. 'Til the summer! I still can't forget that stricken look on your face when I told you I might be pregnant.

BEN
I admit -- I froze. I had a million thoughts why I shouldn't be a father. But then, I came up with a great reason why I should. It would be our child. In fact, I got so excited, I went to the mall. I went nuts. I bought a whole pile of Red Sox baby toys. You should see, I got this cute little size one Red Sox jersey. You know, for our little... player to be named later... I still have it for... whenever.

For a moment, Lindsey seems to be getting drawn in. But she stops herself.

LINDSEY
Ben, don't you see what's happening? The season's almost over, your team's been eliminated and you're looking to fill the void. I'm not calling you a liar -- maybe at this moment you truly believe you'll change... but I truly believe you can't. I'm sorry, Ben... I just can't give you back the ability to hurt me.

She turns and goes. WE HOLD ON Ben. He's badly hurt.

TITLE CARD:

"MATHEMATICALLY ELIMINATED"

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

ANGLE ON THE TABLE, SET FOR FOUR

A bottle of wine is being poured into glasses -- one, two, three, but a HAND COVERS the fourth glass.

MOLLY (O.C.)
None for me.

REVEAL: Lindsey, Sarah, Robin and Molly lunching.

ROBIN
None for you? Why not?

Pause.

MOLLY
(excitedly)
I'm pregnant!

The other three SCREAM like Banshees. "Oh my God!!" HUGGING, KISSING, HYSTERIA.

SARAH
I knew it!

MOLLY
You did not!

SARAH
I told Lindsey. I said "Look at her boobs, they're engorged." Is Steve excited?

MOLLY
Are you kidding? He ran out and bought him-her a little train engineer's hat.

SARAH/ROBIN
Awww...

LINDSEY
(wistfully)
They do that don't they? Hats... shirts...

CONTINUED:

Robin's PHONE RINGS. She answers it.

ROBIN
Hello...

Carrie comes running in, very excited.

CARRIE
(to Lindsey)
Come on, get up, let's go!

LINDSEY
(frightened)
What's the matter?

ROBIN
(to Molly)
It's Chris.
(into phone)
Guess what, Molly's pregnant.

CARRIE
Mr. Halpern just announced you got the promotion!

Lindsey SCREAMS.

LINDSEY
Oh my god, now my breasts are engorged!

ROBIN
(into phone)
That was Lindsey. She got her promotion. What a lunch!

CARRIE
He's waiting for you, he's got champagne, everybody's holding a glass. I told them you were in the ladies room.

Lindsey starts to go. She's excited.

LINDSEY
Molly, I'm sorry, I have --

MOLLY
It's all right. Go!

ROBIN
(into phone)
'Bye.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(hangs up)
Guess what Chris is doing, right now?

LINDSEY
I gotta go.

ROBIN
He's buying Ben's baseball tickets.

LINDSEY
Fine. I --
(stops cold)
What?

CARRIE
Lindsey, please! Come on.

ROBIN
Ben is selling Chris his Red Sox tickets.

Lindsey is STUNNED.

LINDSEY
You mean, like, for today?

ROBIN
No, permanently. Chris is giving him a hundred and twenty five thousand dollars.

SARAH
Are you guys that rich?

ROBIN
Well ... Yes.

SARAH
Why don't you dress better?

LINDSEY
Wait a minute! Ben is selling his Red Sox seats???

ROBIN
Yeah. They're at the game right now. Chris is seeing if he likes the seats.

CARRIE
(urgently)
The hell with his seats. They're holding champagne! Halpern will give the promotion to someone else just so he can have a drink!

CONTINUED: (3)

Lindsey thinks. Then:

LINDSEY
Right. Let's go. No, wait. You stay here, take notes on the lunch so I don't miss a thing.

Lindsey runs out. Carrie sits in her place and places a small recorder on the table.

CARRIE
(to the others)
Go ahead.

INT. LINDSEY'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A CROWD is gathered all holding glasses of champagne. Lindsey bursts in.

LINDSEY
Here I am. I made it.

EVERYONE APPLAUDS. Halpern gives her a hug.

HALPERN
I guess you know why we're here.

LINDSEY
(joking)
I'm fired?

EVERYONE LAUGHS.

PEOPLE call out "Speech."

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(breathless)
Well!... First of all, thank you Mr. Halpern... Do I finally get to call you Larry?

Halpern doesn't laugh, making Lindsey uneasy.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I guess not.
(more seriously)
The truth is, I like it here. I like this work. I... I know what I'm doing here. In fact... this is the only place where I know what I'm doing. This is... controllable. It's... Safe.

CONTINUED:

Isn't that what Ben said about baseball?

She starts to get a little emotional. People are staring at her.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
He bought a little shirt... Oh my god, what have I done? He's selling his Red Sox tickets! For me! What have I ever given up for anybody that meant that much?!...
(forcefully)
Hah??!

HALPERN
(frightened)
... I don't know.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - BEN'S SEATS - DAY

Ben is sitting next to Chris. The regulars are all there. Ben is irritable. The regulars are angry at Ben.

CHRIS
Does this guy with the big head always sit in front of you?

BEN
(annoyed)
He's new -- I don't know -- look, you want the tickets?

Al hits Ben with a rolled-up program.

BEN (CONT'D)
Ow!

AL
Your Uncle Carl is gonna come back and haunt you for this!

EXT. FENWAY PARK - OUTSIDE

A CAB pulls up. Lindsey jumps out. It's the middle of the game so there aren't many people outside. She runs up to a TICKET WINDOW. It's closed. She's frustrated.

LOITERER
Sold out, lady. It's Fan Appreciation Day. They're giving away a sailboat.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
Great.

She looks around desperately.

A SCALPER spots her.

SCALPER
(sotto)
You need tickets?

LINDSEY
(gratefully)
Yes!

SCALPER
I got two. A hundred each.

LINDSEY
A hun -- It's the fifth inning!

SCALPER
Hey, they're giving away a sailboat.

LINDSEY
All right, give me one.

SCALPER
I can't break them up.

She makes a frustrated noise and opens her wallet.

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

TERESA
(angrily)
You're selling these seats for exactly the same price they sold Babe Ruth for!

VIV
(angrily)
Relationships come and go! The Red Sox are forever!

AL
(angrily)
I want my sponges back!

EXT. OUTSIDE

The Scalper is using a marker to check the authenticity of Lindsey's cash.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY
Look -- Eliot Ness -- I want those tickets now!

He hands them to her.

SCALPER
I tell you what. Since you only need one, I'll buy the other one back from you for ten dollars.

LINDSEY
Ten dollars?

She holds one ticket right up to his face and tears it into little pieces and blows it in his face.

SCALPER
Enjoy the game.

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

BEN
(to the regulars)
If I keep these seats, all I'll think about every time I'm here is what I gave up for them.

EXT. GRANDSTAND

Lindsey is trying to get down to Ben's seats. An USHER stops her.

USHER
This ticket is for Rightfield. That way.

LINDSEY
I just need to talk to somebody down there.

USHER
I know that ploy. Rightfield.

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

TERESA
How do you know she'll even take you back?

CONTINUED:

BEN
I'm not just doing it for her. It's also for me. I need to get my life in order. Some perspective. Some balance.

CHRIS
(decides)
We've got a deal.

BEN
Hm?

CHRIS
I'll buy your seats.

EXT. RIGHTFIELD SEATS

Lindsey reaches her seat. She's desperate. She doesn't know what to do. A GUY next to her has binoculars.

LINDSEY
Could I...?

BINOCULAR GUY
Hm? Oh. All yours.

LINDSEY
Thanks.

She finds Ben and Chris with the binoculars. Chris is unfolding documents and handing Ben a pen.

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

CHRIS
Sign by the red tabs. Initial by the yellow tabs.

AL
What are you buying the stadium? Look at that thing!

EXT. RIGHTFIELD

LINDSEY
You idiot, why don't you have a cellphone!
(realizes)
Oh!

She uses speed dial on her phone.

CONTINUED:

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Robin, what's Chris' cell number?

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

Ben FREEZES. It's hard for him to go through with it. His hand starts to tremble. He notices the trembling.

BEN
This is odd.

AL
You're having a stroke! Good!

Chris' phone RINGS. He grabs it.

CHRIS
(expansively)
I don't want to talk anyone now. I'm at the ballgame!

He turns his phone OFF.

EXT. RIGHTFIELD

Lindsey, growing more and more frustrated, hangs up.

EXT. BEN'S SEATS

Ben grabs his own hand to steady it.

AL/TERESA/ARTIE/VIV
No, Ben... no... don't do it...

CHRIS
(seductively)
Check's all made out

Ben is sweating. He looks around.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(seductively)
I'll invite you to some of the games...

Ben decides. He LOOKS UP.

BEN
Sorry, Uncle Carl.

He leans over to sign.

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, the CROWD ROARS.

AL
(annoyed)
Aah, another idiot.

BEN
Hm?
(looks up)

A SMALL FIGURE is RUNNING ON the field.

TERESA
Wait, this is different. It's a well-dressed woman.

Ben watches, then can't believe his eyes.

BEN
Holy --!

ON THE FIELD

It's Lindsey, trying to cross the field from Rightfield to third Base. COPS give chase. The Crowd LAUGHS. Lindsey, as we know keeps herself fit. She's fast. She jukes and dodges around like a quarterback scrambling against a blitz.

A couple of times she's almost caught, but she's too elusive. She breaks out of the pack and sprints towards Ben's section. She reaches the railing and tries to climb over as the Cops chase her. STRUGGLING, she suddenly finds herself lifted over the railing and in Ben's arms.

BEN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?! You're gonna get arrested!

LINDSEY
Don't sell your tickets!

She goes towards Ben's seats. He follows.

BEN
What? That's why you ran across the field?

LINDSEY
Yes. To stop you.

BEN
Tell me, the infield, is it spongey or...?

LINDSEY
Ben. Focus.

BEN
Sorry.

LINDSEY
These tickets are important to you. It's your Uncle Carl, your summer family... you love these tickets.

BEN
Yeah... But I love you more.

LINDSEY
But --

BEN
No. I'm tired of being a spectator in my own life. Look... I fell in love with this when I was seven years old because I had nothing else in my life. But now I'm in love with you... and nothing else in my life matters.

LINDSEY
(in love)
Nothing?

BEN
Except maybe a little Red Sox shirt sitting in my dresser drawer. Chris... your pen.

Chris hands him a pen and Ben prepares to sign the contract. Lindsey touches Ben's hand.

He turns to sign the Contract.

LINDSEY
You love me enough to sell your tickets. I love you enough not to let you do it.

She grabs Chris' contract and tears it in half.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Let's do it all, Ben. Let's try to jerk one out of the park.

CONTINUED: (3)

--

BEN
That is the sexiest thing anyone's ever said to me.

He grabs her passionately. Their lips are close.

LINDSEY
(passionately)
Ben.

BEN
(passionately)
Yes?

LINDSEY
I'm being arrested.

COPS have them encircled.

COP
All right, let her go, buddy.

BEN
Never.

They kiss.

AS THE CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND their passionate kiss, the Lighting, the Noise, the entire Ambience changes. The Crowd is now Roaring, Ecstatic. Fireworks are going off. The Fans are On their Feet, Cheering Deliriously.

WE SEE that Ben and Lindsey are now in their seventies, amid the happiest crowd of fans ever.

ON THE FIELD

The Red Sox, celebrate the winning of the 2043 World Series.

THE END